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THE NEW HELOISE

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I.

THE cloister lay bathed in the late afternoon sunshine. It was not only bathed,—it basked, it glowed, it was saturated with the vividdest of reds; the gray pile was incarnadined, the diamond-shaped panes gave back a thousand glittering sparkles; it looked like a castle on fire.

Ange issued from the little side door. A castle on fire was the coat of arms of his family. He turned and surveyed the ancient pile and wondered how the rubble masonry could take on so deep a glow. He gazed upward at the fleecy clouds, which were glorious in a brilliant flame of rose—an afterglow of crimson. He glanced away to the right, where the river rolled just now in a majestic, sweeping, deep-red flood across the end of the cloister gardens,—and peace was in his heart. The world was beautiful, and his life in this quiet, holy place had seemed to soften his resentment against those two who had wrested his adoration and his memories from him.

When Ange recalled his life in the world, he sometimes grew discontented, but he was just, up to a certain limit, and asked himself of what he had to complain. He had entered the monastery of his own free will. He was twenty-three at this time. His father had married when Ange was twenty-one years of age, and he did not like his step-mother any better to-day than on the day of their marriage. It was true, as he acknowledged to himself, she had never done anything to make him dislike her. On the contrary, she adored him, but she had married his father, and that was treachery enough. Ange often reviewed his father's early devotion to his soft-eyed, retiring mother, the gentle

woman who had so carefully planned their future for them before she had died of an incurable disease. Ange was to live always with his father and care for him, and recompense him as much as possible for her departure. And they two were to look forward all their days on earth to joining her in that Better Land where their life as a trio would be taken up again.

The death of the lad's mother had occurred when he was seventeen, and for the succeeding four years her wishes had been carried out with a fidelity which is as rare as it is pathetic. He and his father had lived the exact and retrospective lives which she has mapped out for them. Their Sunday services, their week-day charities, their walks together, the lessons, the occasional visit to the spot where she lay, the sweet-smelling bouquets laid upon the mound, the half-yearly visits to Uncle Antoine, Ange's mother's brother, at the old Monastery of St. Sulpice, where Uncle Antoine was the abbot, all these observances were attended to with the happy conviction that she had wished it—that she would have it so. The eyes of father and son alike were fixed on the future. Death had no terrors for them. She was there. They should join her.

"Only," said Ange, in one of his rare bursts of confidence, for he was a shy child, "you will go first, and I shall have to wait here alone."

His father wiped his eyes and said that he came of a long-lived race, and perhaps the good God would allow them to go together and come in upon her hand in hand, as they were walking then.

A life of joyful looking forward they lived,—it was the ideal life, the life Elysian,—when suddenly out of the blue, as it were, a strange new being had burst in upon their pious and morbid seclusion,—a widow, very young, very pretty, very vivacious, very much dressed, very amiable. Indeed, almost every attribute that is aggressively bright and gay and which can be accentuated by the adjective "superlative" might be applied without stint to Madame Bellefontaine. She carried them off their feet, both father and son, Ange as well as the Vicomte.

Ange was in no danger of forgetting his mother, she was a thing apart, but when Madame Bellefontaine laid her hand upon his shoulder and called him her dear boy he felt as if he could have died for her. Why, then, should he have been so outraged when he discovered that the Vicomte was also lost, steeped in the attractive wile of her charms, and why turn on both father and Madame Bellefontaine in a demoniac rage when he was informed that that lady had decided to become Madame la Vicomtesse.

"And I shall be your maman, dear child," she had said

"My maman! Never! Never my maman! So that was what it meant,—all your cajoleries, all your caresses. Were you caressing him when I was not by? Oh! it was not me that you cared for, but my

father, my old father, who promised my mother never to forget her, that he would always remember her,—always, always.”

“I will help him to remember her, dear child,” said Madame Bellefontaine, and she kept her word. “Thy father is not too old,—many a man marries at his age,—and as for thee, dear Ange, thou art growing morbid, thou mopest all day, thou——”

“You shall not tu-toyer me,” said Ange angrily; “you shall not——”

“Thou lovedst me a half hour ago, Ange; why love me less now that thou art to be my child, that we are to be always together?”

“I shall never be your child,” said Ange; “we shall not be together. That life was planned for my father and me by my dear, dearest mother. I shall go to my Uncle Antoine, the Abbot of St. Sulpice, I will live with him in the cloister, I will study in the school, and I will die there. I eschew womankind, you first of all, Madame.”

He jerked his shoulder out from under the jewelled hand, the touch of whose fingers had formerly caused little thrills to course through his frame, as the sunshine starts the sap running upward in the fresh young tree.

Madame Bellefontaine’s beautiful eyes were full of tears.

“Then you never loved me, child,” she said in a rather hard voice.

“Loved you! I hate you! I hate your voice, and your beautiful manners, and your beautiful jewels and dresses. My mother never had such—though we had wealth enough.”

“Probably she did not want them, child. She——” But Ange had flung away from her, sore with her, with his father, and his world.

He would not remain for the wedding, but went away with scant farewell and nursed his grief at the old Cloister of St. Sulpice. He would live and die in that holy brotherhood, and leave the little he possessed to the order, where he hoped to find peace. His father’s defection from their cherished principles had turned the sweetness of his life to gall. He thought of him with bitterness. He wished never to see him again. He sent no letters from the cloister out into the world, except an occasional one to old Melisse, who had nursed him from childhood. In those letters, which Uncle Antoine duly edited, he told Melisse that his heart was dead, his life ended. That he should never see her more. That when he had become sufficiently prepared by study in the school he should become a monk, a holy man, and look no more on womankind. “But that will never be, I fear,” he would add, “for I must be at peace with all the world, and I shall never forgive my father—never! If ever I am found worthy, I shall change my name; it will be Pierre, and I shall live in the monastery with Uncle Antoine and die there; the sooner the better.”

It is one of the strangest provisions of Providence that the griefs and woes of a lifetime may pass across the vision in a space measured by seconds. The meteor-like flash that showed again to Ange these retrospective pictures occupied but little space in actual time. He had stood looking into the sky for a moment, and that was all. Now he started on his way along the walk between the rose-bushes which were the pride of the cloister, his hand passing lightly over this or that great bloom with a caressing touch. Next to his thoughts of his mother, he loved his flowers, and it was his privilege to be allowed to aid the gardener, old Ulysse, in his daily work,—that is, after lessons and prayers were done with for the hour, for the voice of prayer is never silent within the confines of the cloister walls. How lovely the cherry-trees were with their myriads of white blossoms! Massed together almost as one great flower, they appeared in keen, sharp contrast against the vivid green of the spring grass, against the ultramarine of the spring sky stretching snow-white horizontal sheets in a sheltering canopy, about which bees hummed in the hot spring day, and in their struggle for more sweets than they could carry dislodged the blossoms, which fluttered to the ground. The long walk which ran underneath the wall was shaded by these same cherry-trees, and when the baby breeze modestly blew, it scattered uncounted millions of the petals, making a snow-white carpet that no king's could rival.

Upon the arm of Ange was a small basket. In this were the simple implements of his trade—the trade he loved. In front of him stood a very high wall which was a part of the boundary of the domain. The wall was ancient; no one knew how old it was; it had crumbled in some places, and to-day it was to be the part of Ange to repair its breaches or train the vines that clambered over it so that the discrepancies could not be seen from the rose-garden. The training of the vines was a work in which his soul revelled, and he took his way almost light-heartedly across the open space which separated the wall from the rose-garden.

When Ange reached the wall he set his basket upon the ground. He had no ladder; old Ulysse only was privileged to use a ladder and look over the top of the wall into the outside world, though what good it was to him, in this spot, no one could determine. On the opposite side of the wall lay a stretch of garden, badly cared for, because the owner was absent. In the distance Ulysse had said that he could descry nothing but some chimneys, and he always came down from the ladder more quickly than he had mounted. As for Ange, he stood at the base of the wall and trained the vines as high as his arms could reach.

Now he placed his basket upon the ground and selected from it some bits of leather and a few tacks. The leathers he hung upon the

sturdy portions of the vine which had not succumbed to wind or storm, the tacks he laid upon a projecting bit of the old masonry. Then he stooped again and raised with tender care the vine from its place upon the ground, and drew it upward to the spot in the wall from which a good-sized stone had fallen, dragging the vine with it. The fallen stone had left an irregular opening of good size, which Ange intended to cover by trailing the vines across it, unless old Ulysse should appear very shortly with a trowel and some mortar. Ange stood close to the opening as his thoughts ran on, "and then," he murmured, "when the leaves have grown, and then, when the leaves have grown, when the leaves—have—when the leaves——" The eyes of Ange were on a level with the top of the opening, his face nearly filled it. Suddenly he had grown pale, and stood as one transfixed, as rigid as if turned into one of the stones that made part of the rubble wall, muttering his words still as if by rote. His eyes had fallen upon a vision—a veritable vision. Standing, her back towards him, was a young girl in a yellow cotton gown. She was not more than ten feet away from him. She was employed exactly as he was,—she was tacking up the vines upon the sides of a trellis. She also had a little basket in which were bits of leather, but while the leathers of Ange were ugly browns and blacks, hers were all of pearl white, the thin kid of evening gloves. This, however, Ange did not know; he had never seen that mystery of worldly life, an evening glove. She held her bits of kid in one hand and her tacks in her mouth; this Ange judged from the motion of her hand towards her lips. He could not see her face, but he knew what it would be like before she turned about. The vision was tall and slight. The eye of Ange was glued to the opening as he surveyed the clothing of this wonderful being. The long, shimmering yellow skirt, with its deep flounce of innumerable little pleats, the black belt encircling the small waist, the long sash-ends of black, the black collar with its narrow white edging, the garden hat of black straw weighted down with yellow roses, all this he took in at a glance, his eye moving from the young figure to the slim brown hands which held the leathers above her head and tacked and pressed and—dropped the hammer! Where could the hammer have hidden itself? She turned about. Ah, yes! she turned about! He thought that she was just what he had expected, only a thousand times more lovely, with her oval brown face, her soft gray eyes, her lovely mouth, her short little nose. Her eyes glanced upward; she started and stood staring at the cloister wall. Ange dropped to the ground, thought of St. Anthony, and crossed himself. Was he to succumb at the first sight of a girl? If so, where would be his fortitude for a lifetime? If the sight of the first woman that he saw, a girl in her teens (she must be a girl in her teens, though Ange was

not a very good judge of such matters), gave him such a pang, how could he bear it to live all the years of his existence, to drag through the days and hours until he was an old man, to live a monk's life, until, perhaps, he should reach the age of three-score years and ten? (Ange thought in scriptural phraseology—such had been his environment.)

"Valentine! Valentine!" Ah, 'twas the feminine of his own name that was being called. His name was Ange Valentine. His mother had often called him "her Valentine." Someone was calling. He had never known how sweet a name it was. It seemed a thousand times more sweet to him when the girl on the other side of the wall answered, "Here I am, Lola, tacking up the vines."

"Why not leave that for the gardeners?" was the reply. "Uncle du Plessis is certain to have the old place put in order."

So they had just arrived. Where had she come from, this Valentine? when had she come? He had thought the house over there behind the trees uninhabited but yesterday. At least in the one peep that he had wickedly taken, Ange had seen no girl there, and now—and now—and now—she was here. He called her she already, fatal sign! He had known her for years! He thought so. Hers was the face that had lived in his heart always,—that he had expected to see, to love, to adore, to worship. It is true that Ange had never thought of any girl, but suddenly he felt as if she had dwelt forever within his heart, his soul,—just this girl, this adorable being, no other. Then steps came running along the path of the next garden and the two girls' voices joined in musical talk.

Ange sat close under the opening, crossing himself diligently, and wondered what St. Anthony would have done under like circumstances. He was sure that during the temptation of that much harassed Saint no form that had appeared to him could have compared with this dear brown vision in yellow. Afraid of rising, for fear of being seen, absorbed in retrospective thought, he sat on the grass, his head against the wall, and then he heard the voices just above him.

"Lola, I saw someone at this hole in the boundary wall just now," said Valentine. The two must have approached the wall nearer, for the other voice asserted distinctly, "I see him now. It is a man. I see his toes."

Ange involuntarily drew in his feet and crouched closer against the base of the dividing structure.

"Where?" asked Valentine. "I see no one."

"Let me look again. No, he is gone. The gardener, probably, but, oh! Valentine, what cherry-blooms! Will ours ever be like those?"

"Cherry-blooms!" exclaimed Valentine, who had been eagerly looking for the intruder during her turn at the opening,—“here, let

me see. Oh, but a cherry-orchard! How I hope they will never discover that the stone has fallen, for if they do, they will close it up."

"It shall never be closed," swore Ange under his breath. He crossed himself and prayed St. Anthony not to let his heart beat so loud, for they would surely hear it. It was like the blows of a sledge-hammer.

"I am very much afraid that the old gardener I saw on the top of the wall yesterday will replace the stone," said Valentine.

"He shall never do it, Sweetheart," whispered Ange, face to the wall, lips to the spot where he was certain her foot must be pressed on the other side, though he could not see it.

"The gardener has a handsome hand," said Valentine, forgetting that she was talking into the cloister grounds and not to Lola. "I saw his fingers yesterday. He put them through the hole while holding a vine in place. A long, slim hand he had, the hand of a gentleman"—a pause and then the question—"Where do you suppose that man has gone?—the man you saw just now?"

"I can't hear you, Valentine. Don't talk into the cloister garden. Oh! that gardener, you mean—farther along the walk, probably. They pay no attention to strangers,—to women,—these priests."

"He seemed to be trying to cover the hole. What shall we do, Lola, if he fills it up with mortar?"

"No one shall fill up the hole, Sweetheart," repeated Ange, his mouth among the grasses. "If old Ulysse fits a stone into the opening, I will knock it out before the mortar is dry."

And now, to give him a chance to prove his words, old Ulysse came hobbling down through the rose-garden, a pail of mortar in his hand. When Ange discovered him he lost color. He lay there until Ulysse was close upon him. The serving brother set his pail upon the ground, and then for the first time he perceived the long form of the young novice stretched on the ground, among the leaves of the vines and tall grass.

"What in the name——" but the finger of Ange was on his lips, and the words of Ulysse were still-born. Then he turned his attention to the cavity which he had come to repair. He laid his eye to the opening, when, "Women! Women!" he shrieked in his quavering voice, dropped the pail and trowel, and lastly himself, beside the young brother. There was the sound of girlish laughter from the other side of the wall, and then a pleading voice said, in tones which would have melted the heart of a cardinal:

"Please, good Mr. Gardener, do not shut us out from your garden. We can do no harm, only look in once in awhile. Do not shut us out!"

"As the devil from Eden!" shouted old Ulysse,— "as the devil from Eden!" and began to search the ground for the fallen block. "Can

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you reach into the bosom of my cassock, brother?" he asked, his eyes tightly closed. Ange did not reply. He crouched beneath the wall, letting events take their course.

With many a struggle Ulysse succeeded in drawing from some inner receptacle a handkerchief, and then he too crouched beneath the opening, holding it out to Ange. "Now, blindfold me, brother," he murmured.

"Nonsense," whispered Ange, "you are too old and too ugly to fear."

There was renewed laughter, the sound of which came through the cavity.

"There are two of them," whispered old Ulysse to Ange, with a shudder, as if mad dogs had been in the next garden.

"There are two of them," laughed Valentine to Lola, and then she put her lovely face into the opening. Such a picture old Ulysse had never dreamed of in all his years of working and hobbling and praying not to fall into temptation.

"Do you think we shall hurt you, good brother?" she called. "Are you not taught charity in the monastery over there? The view is pretty and peaceful; we give you our word we will not so much as glance at you. We beg only that you will not shut us out from your Paradise."

"So the temptress spoke to St. Anthony," whispered Ulysse into the ear of Ange. "A-a-a-ah! Shut thee out? I will shut thee out, never fear," Ulysse continued, still murmuring into the ear of Ange, as he had no other receptacle into which to pour his words. Then he reached out his hand and took the heavy stone from the ground, and, feeling his way as he arose, because his eyes were tightly closed to shut out the sight of temptation, he endeavored to approach the opening. But he was wide of the mark, and Ange, seeing his failure, sprang to his feet.

"I am not so easily affected, Ulysse," he said. "Let me plaster up the hole." He took the granite square from the old man, and, bending a little, his face was on a level with that of the girl. He grew red and white by turns, and she, his vision of brown and yellow, withdrew quickly before this Adonis in priest's clothing. He lifted the stone and set it into the opening with his slim brown hands, but there had been a moment when they had looked into each other's eyes and the mischief was done. As Valentine retreated before the fascinated regard of the stranger, she looked pleadingly at him, and he gazed deprecatingly at her, and then the stone filled the cavity, and Ange with trembling and unwilling hands had taken mortar on his trowel and applied it to the cracks. It was to him as if he were immuring this sweet soul alive. He was shutting her away from his sight forever

more. His knees trembled so that he could hardly stand. When the hole was a hole no longer—"How long does it take mortar to set, Ulysse?" he asked.

Ulysse, who was fast recovering from his fright, now that the danger was removed, and had once more opened his eyes, replied in unsteady tones: "If the mortar is good, half a day, but I fear that this mortar is not very strong. I did not wait for the cow-hairs. I should say that it would not be firm until to-morrow; however, it is set now for all time, or as long as we shall need it. There are other small peep-holes which I shall plaster over to-morrow morning. We have been too careless of the old wall, but who expected them to come prying about, trying with their wiles to tempt a pious brother like me—for thee, Brother Pierre, thou art too young to know what temptation means."

Some hours later, after evening service, Ange stole down through the rose-walk and, feeling his way, he went close to the wall, and feeling for the stone, he pushed it away from him. The soft mortar gave readily and the cavity was a cavity once more. The stone fell within the garden on the opposite side of the wall. No one heard it fall. It made no mark except upon the conscience of the young scholar, and since the early hours of the afternoon his conscience had been getting blunted. It had become astonishingly dull since the hour of sunset.

II

THAT night Ange prayed extra prayers in the chapel of Our Lady, and thus gained extra consideration and concession for himself. This was not his object, however. The burden of his prayer was that no one on the other side would replace the stone, and that for some days at least old Ulysse would not discover the vacant space. He was up at dawn, longing to get into the garden again, but lessons, prayers, prayers and lessons, were his alternate portion, and it was not until the sun was ready to set again that he stood beneath the wall. Ah, it was no dream! The space was clear, and now, grown bolder, he neared the spot, and looked through. Yes, there she was, the vision in yellow; she was not tacking up vines to-day, but standing facing the wall, and looking alternately at something on the ground and then at the opening.

Ange, grown bolder with twenty-four hours' thought of her and for her, peered through and said, "At what are you looking?"

She raised her eyes to his and answered with a pout: "At your piece of granite. Why did you let that old man force you to fill up the hole?"

"It is true that I replaced the stone, but did I not come here in the night and knock it out again?"

"Why did you do that?" she asked, smiling shyly up at him.

"Because you wished it."

She stooped and picked up the heavy thing. Ah, how beautiful she was bending thus, the curves of her lovely figure showing in their free advantage! She raised the stone and said with a mocking smile, "Do you wish to replace it?"

"N-n-no. There are more on this side."

"Then I suppose it is only a question of time when the hole will be filled again?"

"It shall never be filled by me—that is to say, if the sight of the grounds is pleasant to you, I shall not——"

She broke in upon his words, "Are you a priest?"

"I am studying to become one."

"Are you going to remain in the cloister always?"

"Yes," sadly.

"And why? Are you forced to it?"

"I have made up my mind to it."

"Are you happy?"

"I was until——"

"Until——"

"Yesterday."

"Oh, and what happened yesterday?"

"I saw a vision."

"Really? An actual vision?" She drew a step nearer. "Where?" Her eyes were dilated, her lips were serious. "In the chapel?"

"In my chapel."

"And where is your chapel?"

"My shrine, rather."

"And where is that shrine of yours?"

"Where you are standing. I wish that I could kneel and kiss your feet."

She flushed quickly. "That is very prettily said. I thought you meant a real vision."

"I meant a real vision, one in yellow with——"

"You cannot be a priest, you must be a courtier; you have mistaken your vocation." ("I wonder if I have?" thought Ange.) "I have never heard a priest speak so. I thought——"

"They never do—I am a failure—I am only in my novitiate. I am afraid my faith is not strong enough." Ange heard the sound of a far door closing. Ah, that must be Ulysse coming to see how well his stone has remained set.

"Give me the stone," said he hurriedly. "Quick! give it to me." She pushed it through the opening, wondering at his imperative tone. As he took it from her, their fingers touched each other, and sent

little shivers through his frame. In his confusion he nearly dropped the stone, but Ulysse was shuffling down the path, and he pushed it hurriedly within the cavity and held it there. "I must trail the vines across the opening," he whispered through a tiny crack, "but when he has gone I will remove it, that you may still see—the"—a pause—"the cherry-blossoms."

"Thank you, good priest," she whispered back at him, half laughing, half serious. He hardly knew whether she spoke in mockery or in earnest. He stooped and gathered up the vines, and old Ulysse, seeing him thus employed and that the empty space was filled, turned to the right and went down towards the river.

When the sound of his footsteps had died away, "What is your name?" asked the girl, her mouth to the crack.

"The same as your own," whispered Ange. He felt her scented breath upon his cheeks, his lips nearly meeting hers. "My name is Ange Valentine," and then there were footsteps on the girl's side of the wall, and a voice said, "Mademoiselle, Monsieur du Plessis is calling for you."

"My father has sent for me," she whispered. "Good-by until——" He did not hear the last word. He hoped that it had been "to-morrow;" at all events, to-morrow would see him at the very spot as early as he could get away.

It was remarkable how much training those creeping vines needed. Ange was at the wall the next afternoon. She was there too, all in shimmering white. Ah heavens! what a reincarnated vision of loveliness. All in white, a white shade hat, covered with great bunches of violets, shading her eyes, those gray eyes with black lashes, which took on a blue shade as the violets were reflected in them. She was close to the opening when he removed the stone, and, putting her face so near that her lips almost touched his ear, she whispered, "Will you give me a rose from your garden?"

He turned without a word towards the flower-beds. The roses were almost in their greatest perfection. Some great purple-black blooms stood flaunting their gorgeous heads in superior beauty above the more humble flowers. There was the handsomest of all standing high and splendid upon its great stalk. He took his pruning-knife and slashed through the thick, juicy stem and then cut seven or eight of the finest roses from the plants. Now their denuded stalks stood up ragged and unsightly. He returned to the wall and, brushing the flowers across his face and drawing in his breath as if in ecstasy, thrust them through to her.

"Oh! oh! what beauties! And are they yours?"

He turned away with crimson face. That had never occurred to him. They were not his, but Brother Anselme's, a stern old man who

had raised them, working early and late to be able to send them to the Agricultural Fair. His roses had always for eleven years past taken the prize, why not this year? There could be only one reason, and that would be because they were not sent. Ange replaced the stone without another look at his darling temptress, and, picking up his basket, walked quickly up through the garden towards the monastery. His heart gave a great thump as he saw Brother Anselme coming out of a farther door with his Uncle Antoine, the Abbot, Father Matthieu, as all must call him. He heard Brother Anselme's unctuous voice as he turned to the Abbot. "Yes, father," he was saying, "they are finer than any that I have raised thus far. The monastery will have a greater reputation than ever before. Come and see them, father, come!" Ange slunk in at the refectory door. He had never felt ashamed in his life until to-day. His soul was in a turmoil. When she had asked him for a rose he never thought of their not being his to give. She wished them, that was enough, and he had plucked them without a thought. But now thought had come, and with it fear, not for himself, but for her. Well, he would make up his mind to one thing—her name, her presence, her possession of the roses should never be divulged to a living soul. He went to his little cell and took up a book of prayers. How could he read the prayers, how ask for blessings, when he was a thief, and his theft unconfessed? He was willing to confess to the delirium of a moment. Could he protect her from participation in his beloved sin? But, no! prayers were not for such as he. He took up his study-book, but between himself and the page he saw ever the nutbrown face, the gray eyes reflecting the blue of the violets, and heard the sweet voice saying, "Will you give me a rose?"

When supper was finished, the scholars were about to take their decorous departure when the Abbot arose. "Stay a moment," he said. "Face about, I have a question to ask." Ah! now it was coming. The signs of guilt in the face of Ange were so marked that it is wonderful he was not at once accused; but his day of grace was not of long duration. The students, innocent and unconscious of wrong, answered to their names, and when Father Matthieu demanded, "Hast thou plucked some of the roses from the bed of Brother Anselme?" each one answered with straightforward innocence, "No, father."

And now it was the turn of Ange to answer. The student next to him had replied promptly "No," and as he heard that voice answer in the honest negative and felt that his turn must come next his heart gave a great leap, there was a ringing in his ears, and he fell to the floor, unconscious that the questioning was still going on, unconscious of everything. Carried to his cell by some of the students, he lay there until the physician of the cloister had been brought to him.

Uncle Antoine sat by his bedside, the tears in his eyes. "It is like his dear mother, my sister," he said. "She often had such attacks. The lad has been working too many hours in the sun."

When Ange came to himself it was to wish that he were unconscious still, for the return was to misery fourfold. A great leaden weight seemed to rest upon his heart and bear it down. He turned his face to the wall, and lay there pale and still.

"What is it, my little one?" asked Uncle Antoine, who occasionally, when alone with the lad, allowed himself to use a term of endearment which his mother had used. "What is it? Here, eat some of this nice broth, that the old Mark has made for thee. Thou needest strength, first of all."

"I need to die," whispered the youth in a heart-broken voice. He lay still for some time, then turned, and with misery in his eyes he stretched out his hand and took Uncle Antoine's thin old fingers in his own. He held the hand of the Abbot as if he had no other hope in life. There was a noise at the door. The old man gave the lad's fingers a kindly pressure, and withdrew his own hurriedly. Signs of tenderness should all be obliterated within the conventual walls. It would never do for the serving brother to see that Uncle Antoine was still a worldling so far as his heart was concerned. His dear sister's child was ill, in misery—perhaps he would soon go to her, perhaps—"Enter," said Uncle Antoine, and sat upright and blew his nose. When the serving brother had set a cup upon the table, had again departed, and the door was closed—"Let me hold your hand again, Uncle Antoine," said Ange. The Abbot looked over his shoulder at the door where the serving brother had just gone out. "Father Matthieu, my child," he said.

"Let me call you Uncle Antoine just once again, until I have said a few words to you, uncle, a few words which will make us as strangers, just until—it will not be long—just until I make my confession——"

"Ange," whispered the old man, bending over the drawn face, "it wast thou who took the roses."

"Yes," came from the trembling lips, "I took the roses."

"What could have been thy motive, my child?"

The youth was silent.

"I cannot think it was jealousy; thy roses are almost as fine as those of Brother Anselme, but thou wouldst never——"

"Oh! No! No! Never!" cried the miserable lad, shaking and sobbing with misery.

"There, there, calm thyself, my child, tell old Uncle Antoine why thou hast cut the roses, the purple-black roses of Brother Anselme, the pride of the cloister?"

"I can never tell thee, Uncle Antoine," said Ange; "that is a question which I can never answer. Give me penance on penance, punish me as thou wilt, dear Uncle Antoine, I can never tell thee or anyone why I took the roses. They are faded now, they will never see the Fair."

"They were to be cut this morning; thou hast broken the heart of good Brother Anselme."

"We are told not to set our heart upon things of this earth," whispered Ange, with a faint suggestion of self-defence.

"Yes, child, but it was to the glory of the monastery. Now the convent over at St. Marly will take the prize, the first time in eleven years." Ange could say nothing; his tears flowed; his pillow was wet.

"And thou wilt not tell me?" again urged Uncle Antoine.

"I cannot."

"Thou wilt not."

"I will not then, dear Uncle Antoine. Ask me no more—ask me no more." Uncle Antoine had once been young; this was his little sister's child. He stooped over the lad.

"Try to sleep," he said. "Perhaps when thou art well the good God will help thee to do right."

"I will never do right, if that is doing right," answered Ange in a broken-hearted whisper through his tears.

Father Matthieu did not divulge the confession of Ange all at once. He waited until the lad was well enough to sit up, and when he was outside once more, close to the wall of the refectory in the old wheel-chair which had been brought from the hospital, he came to the lad, Frere Anselme following: "Tell the good brother all the truth," he said, and left them alone. Ange, still weak, could not keep the tears from his eyes.

"Thou art sorry," said Frere Anselme kindly in his fat voice. Ange, who had determined to tell no falsehood, even if he did not speak the whole truth, whispered a weak "No."

"Not sorry? Not sorry that thou hast destroyed my roses, and the glory of our cloister?"

"No," whispered Ange, "I am not sorry."

"And thou wouldst do it over again?"

"Yes," again whispered Ange, "I would do it over again, good father, for the same provocation."

"And what was thy provocation?"

"That I cannot tell."

"Had I done aught to anger thee, child, that thou must cut down my roses?"

"No! No! No!" Ange almost shrieked the words. "Never, dear Father Anselme. I cannot tell thee, may God forgive me, I cannot tell."

"And where are the roses?" Ange was silent.

"Dost thou not know?" The words that rang through the brain of the youth were—"Near her heart, pray our Lady, even though withered, near her heart," but his lips framed no sentence.

"Our good Abbot tells me that I shall impose a punishment upon thee," said Father Anselme.

"I am ready," replied the lad.

"I have thought it over. It must be something that will give thee real unhappiness; not a revenge,—that I am not thinking of,—but for thy good. I would not shut thee up, thou needest God's sunshine, but thou must do something that is not pleasant to thee. Knowing how thou lovest the rose-garden, the training of the vines, day after day, the penance which I shall impose is that thou go no more to the boundary wall for the rest of the——"

But he did not finish the sentence. Ange had raised his hands in air. His figure shook. "Anything but that," he cried, "any—anything but that."

"I knew that it would be a penance. Thou wilt employ thyself upon the other side of the cloister; thou shalt help the stable men, thou shalt milk the cows, and live among the sweet-smelling breath of the cattle, but smell a rose again, no! no more this summer, Brother Pierre, no more before the winds of autumn are here." When Brother Anselme had ceased speaking he was frightened, for the lad had sunk down in his chair, his head fallen upon his breast. "I fear I was too harsh with him," said Brother Anselme. "If the good God lets him live, he shall sit in the rose-garden and pluck my roses too, and never tell what he has done with them. There was some temptation too strong for the child."

There came a time, after many days of misery, when Ange was strong enough to walk alone down by the cloister wall. He had wondered if she would miss him, whether she had noticed his absence. Lessons were thought too confining for him just now, and so he was alone in the rose-garden on the first sunny day. He had paused, looking at the wall, where, to his joy, the familiar opening was still apparent to him, though the leaves had grown thickly across it. Then he began to walk slowly towards that Mecca of his desires. When he reached the place he leaned against the sunbaked stones and wondered whether she would come, or whether he had seen the last of her.

Ah! what was that? The sound of a footfall. Was it hers? He held his cheek against the stone, his eye to the cavity. Had she worn ever a gown of blue? No, and yet it was she! she! she! Along the walk she came, and directly to the well-known cavity, where she parted the vines. She started when she saw him. "So you have come at last, at last!" she cried. "Oh! oh! what have they done to you?"

"I have been ill," said Ange. "Will you let me touch your hand?"

She drew a little backward and thrust her hand through the opening. He clasped it within his. He laid his cheek against the pink palm, and then he heard her say, "May I see your ring?" He slipped from his finger the little plain ring which his mother had given him and placed it on hers. It was his dearest possession, but if his mother had known all his misery, she would have loved to see him happy. She would have loved Valentine because, because—— The girl withdrew her hand from him; her face was hot; her eyes were shining. She looked more closely at the little ring; she slipped it first on, then off her finger, and then he heard her exclaim, "Oh! oh! I have dropped your ring."

"You will find it again," said Ange, "I know you will; keep it until I see you again."

"When will that be, An—Ange?"

"Oh! oh! how sweet my name sounds. Say it again."

"Ange, when will that be?"

"To-morrow, if you are here, Valentine." There was the sound of heavy soles crushing the gravel. Two priests were coming down the long walk. "Go! Go!" he said. "Do not speak again. I will be here to-morrow at this time." When she had retreated and he had drawn the vines across the hole with careless motion, he looked at his finger and the narrow band which the ring had worn upon it, and he wondered if he could be the young student who was to become a priest next year, Brother Pierre, of the Cloister of St. Sulpice.

But there was no to-morrow for them; a summer storm had come, the garden was wet and cold, the flowers were beaten bare of leaves, the walks ran little rivers, and Valentine was forbidden to leave the walls of the cloister. As the three days and nights of the storm lingered, he tried to forget her. He said forty Our Fathers and fifty Hail Marys, but still her face, with its laughing eyes, came between him and the page. While muttering his prayers, he was even then feeling within his cassock for a pencil. He scrawled something across the fly-leaf of his prayer-book; he tore it out and, folding it, placed it securely within his bosom. When the sun shone again he was at his post, but she was there before him.

"Have you been ill again?" she asked. "Have you? Have you?"

His heart beat in double time at the anxiety that spoke in her words.

"No, no," said he, "it was the rain."

"I was here, even in the rain; I came every day."

"They would not let me come," said he. "Do you think I should have allowed you to be here without me?" His trembling fingers sought the bosom of his cassock, they grasped a little piece of folded paper and thrust it through the opening.

"Valentine! Valentine!" he heard someone call, "Monsieur du Plessis is asking for you."

"My father wants me," she whispered as she had said once before. "Good-by, An—dear Ange, good-by." She turned away and unfolded the paper as she walked.

"Je t'aime, Je t'aime," was scrawled across the paper.

The youth stood looking after her retreating figure. He noticed not the two priests who passed along the walk surveying his attitude with curiosity.

"The mystery is solved," said Brother Anselme to himself, "my roses went through that hole. He must be disciplined."

The next day, when Ange came again to his accustomed spot, the stone was replaced, plastered over for all time. There were cow-hairs in plenty mixed with repairing medium. The mortar had set.

III.

It was a day in August when Ange, taking little interest in the world, in which, however, he was forced to live, was surprised by a summons to the Abbot's parlor. Who could want to see him? His heart gave a great thump as his thoughts flew away to the girl on the other side of the wall; but, no, she would never come here to seek him out,—that was his part to play; but he had heard old Ulysse say that there was no smoke issuing from the chimney now, and he had heard from the man who brought the slips of autumn plants that the family at the great house were absent. Could it be his father or Melisse who wished to see him? Of his stepmother he never thought. She had created this life of his, and for one reason he felt that he had her to thank. He arose from the bench where he was trying to fix his mind on the lessons for the day and went downstairs to the Abbot's parlor. He came with dragging step and lack-lustre eye.

"But what have they been doing to thee, child?"—almost the words of Valentine,—the lady exclaimed as she arose to meet him. Meet him? she rushed at him, she enveloped him, she absorbed him. The Abbot saw nothing but a swirl of skirts, a sea of laces. She threw her arms around her stepson; there was nothing to be seen of him; he was hidden, overcome, swallowed up by her frills and flounces, her chains, her beads, and her noise. Ange was made uncomfortable for the rest of the day because a bit of chiffon had swept his eyeball and nearly blinded him. She drew back for a moment and regarded him earnestly.

"It is as the good father has said," she asserted, "thou needest a change. The school here is no place for thee. Thou wert made for the world,—my world."

"Strange that no one has discovered that before in the three years that have passed," said Ange with a touch of sarcasm in his voice.

"I shall take thee out and marry thee. Dost thou know the name of thy future wife, child?"

"Yes," replied Ange.

"Thou dost! So far, so good! So thou hast met Mademoiselle de Larmes? When, then, and where?"

"I have never met Mademoiselle de Larmes. I shall not marry Mademoiselle de Larmes. I am not thinking of marrying."

"And thou hast just said that thou knowest the name of thy future wife! Is the lad daft, good father? What hast thou done to him?" Uncle Antoine blew his nose.

"The lad was very ill in the early summer, Madame——"

"Belle-sœur, belle-sœur, Brother Antoine."

"The lad was ill in the early summer," repeated Father Matthieu. "He recovers but slowly."

"We will take him away from your dim old vaults, father; we will marry him to a charming girl, oh, but charming! I have seen her but now at Aix. We talked it over. They do not know that he is immured in this place——"

"Immured! It was his own wish, Madame," argued the Abbot.

"And what do children such as he know what they wish?"

"I am a child no longer," remonstrated Ange, "I am twenty-three."

"Thou art as much of a man as a lad of seventeen in the outside world. Thy face is young and charming, Ange, child. Come, now! think what happiness to marry a sweet young girl of only nineteen years. Lovely to look upon! Why, I tell thee, child, all the titled men at the baths were at her feet. She would listen to none of them! I must confess that she took no interest, either, in my plans for thee, but her father did when he heard of the nice little fortune, and all thy own! If she marries to please him, she will have a dowry equal to thine. He likes the idea of thy good old family. Why, thy ancestors were cup-bearers to the King when his were stabling horses; but that was long ago. When all is said and done, she is charming. We are invited to their country-house. I will take thee there when thou hast changed thy habit for something not so much like a croque-mort. Forgive me, Brother Antoine, but I never approved of shutting people away from God's sunlight."

"The lad gets plenty of sunlight, Madame," said the old Abbot with some asperity; "he works in the gardens at all hours. We had to allow it after his illness. He plants and grafts and busies himself with the health-giving earth. The rose-garden"—Ange turned pale and dropped his eyes—"is his favorite place. Tell your belle-mere,

Ange, that the rose-garden has thee for an occupant the whole day long."

"It is true I am there a great deal," affirmed the youth with trembling lips.

"When Mademoiselle de Larmes marries she inherits the old place in the Val de Chevreuse. Thou canst live there or in our house at Valençon."

"I shall live neither there nor in the house at Valençon, I shall remain here," answered Ange stubbornly.

"I tell thee she has beauty and youth and riches, or will have, if thou dost not prove obdurate. Her father will give her anything in reason. She does not wish to marry any more than thou, but when she sees thee she will change her mind." She turned to the Abbot. "He is a handsome lad, father, our melancholy young priest—a veritable Adonis in a monk's robe." The face of Ange became crimson at her words. His thoughts flew to the girl on the other side of the wall. He wondered if she had thought him even passable looking, and then he blushed again at the thought that he had such a thought.

"Where is my father?" he asked.

"He is at home."

"Is he well?" His lip trembled at the thought of what his father once was to him.

"He has a cold. He could not come. I volunteered to come. The physician insisted on quiet. He is as anxious for this marriage as I am. Think how disquieted he will be shouldst thou refuse, Ange. He prays thee to go with me to see Mademoiselle de Larmes. We could drive—take the trap from the station there. He has fallen at her feet like all the rest. I am inclined to be jealous." His step-mother laughed gayly. "Thou must please him and marry, and preserve my reason."

"I shall never marry her," declared Ange in that positive tone which reckons not with the future, and with that firm belief in his especial fate which is so often overthrown.

For answer the lady turned to the Abbot. "Get the child's things packed, Father Matthieu, he is coming home with me. I cannot wait long." The Vicomtesse flashed and sparkled and glittered and laughed, and caressed Ange whether he would or no. She was very pretty. Her eyes were lovely; she was somewhat stouter than before; she had a sweet, evanescent perfume about her. Valentine wondered how he could ever have thrilled at her touch. He suffered her caresses, however. He did not jerk his shoulder away from her as formerly. He was tired of being angry. Nothing made much difference to him now.

"And his clothes, and his boxes, and his valise; get them all,

Father Matthieu, he must leave with me this very afternoon. He must meet Mademoiselle de Larmes to-morrow, they must be betrothed, and shortly he must marry, the child, so soon as we can make the arrangements." Ange shrank away from her caresses.

"The clothes that I brought with me are all too small," he said. "I gave them away to the stableman's son. I have nothing but this"—he glanced downward at his monk's robe—"and a better one for Sunday."

"Well! Well! Come! Come! I can buy thee something in the town. See, I have a purse full of money." She shook it at him, laughing and showing her pretty teeth.

"I shall remain here with Uncle Antoine," said Ange. "I am no longer a child. Soon I shall take the vows. I shall be a priest, and think no more of the world," he sighed.

"Thou art old enough to marry. Thy father longs for little feet about the house. Thy brother for someone to play with."

"Have I a brother?" asked Ange, breathless at this revelation, aroused from his listlessness,—“a brother, I?”

"Thou hast a brother; he is a lovely boy; his name is Armand. He will not walk for a year yet."

"Neither will my children, nor for twenty years, nor for a century, for the very good reason that they will never be born."

His thoughts were with Valentine. How could he marry? If he were never to see Valentine again, he would become a priest, at least a celibate.

"Thou hast not taken the final vows," screamed the Vicomtesse.

"Not yet," replied Ange, who was firmly resolved not to take them until he heard that Valentine was removed irrevocably from him by marriage.

"Very well, then, the boxes, thy clothes, thy books. Come! Come! Trains do not wait for stubborn lads."

"They need not wait," said Ange,—“at least for me.”

"As I said, thou hast grown stubborn."

"Only since I found you out," returned Ange. "You changed all my life. You drove me here."

The Vicomtesse looked kindly down into his eyes. "I would not have done it, dearest," she said. "And hast thou been unhappy, then?"

"Unhappy! Unhappy!" His tell-tale cheeks were suffused with color, his eyes shone, his lashes were wet, his frame trembled.

"Ah, and is a monastery so exciting as that? What hast thou found to fascinate thee so?"

Ange stood silent. He felt that his lost and bitterly deplored happiness had been brought to him through the unwitting agency of his stepmother. Suddenly, as he recognized this, a wave of gratitude

welled up within his heart. He took a step nearer her. He did not hold out his hand, but she felt as if she had approached him nearer. "I thank you," he said, "for sending me here, for driving me from my father's house. I have found here such bliss as probably you have never known."

The Vicomtesse gazed at the lad aghast. "I never understood that thy vocation was for the religious life."

"Do not tu-toyer me," said Ange. "You have no more right than the most utter stranger. I am not and never was——"

"Ah, petit,"—she threw her arms around his unwilling shoulders,—
"soften that stubborn heart of thine. Come home with me. Come to us at Valençon. Come home to thy father, to thy little brother, who knows thy portrait already. He calls thee so prettily, 'Ange, Ange, Frere Ange.' He has thy father's eyes."

"I have my mother's eyes," said Ange in a hard voice. "Why this sudden interest in me? I have been here three years. All this time you have not been near me, nor my father, either."

"Have we had any encouragement, Ange?" The young man cast his eyes downward. "What of our unanswered letters? Thy father was at first angry at thy running away. Then we travelled somewhat. Have I not written? I have tried my best to bring thy father to reason, but thou must do thy share, child."

"I shall do nothing in the matter," returned Ange. "Why trouble me longer? I shall never leave this place. My heart and soul are in love with the wall which encircles the domain. I can never part from it." The Vicomtesse gazed at her stepson in amazement.

"I thought thou wert malleable, pliable, but thou art hard like the nether millstone. I will come again, dear child. This is not my last visit. Do not encourage him, father, I beg of you; the lad will never be happy as a monk."

"I shall not try to affect his decision, Madame," answered the Abbot. "Each one must decide for himself, just as each must stand or fall alone, whether in the world or in the cloister."

"And after the vows are taken is there no reprieve?" she asked.

"If he decides to remain with the monastery, there is no reprieve. If he takes the vows, it is ended."

"I shall take the vows before you come again," said her stepson.

"And I will carry thy love to thy father."

"Did he send his to me?"

The Vicomtesse hesitated. "Thou hast been a very stubborn child; thou must humble thyself to thy father."

"He must humble himself to me. I am my mother's representative, the only one who has been faithful to her."

"Ange, Ange," soothed the Abbot.

The Vicomtesse's cheeks flushed a painful red. Tears filled her eyes.

"I love your father," she said. "I have made him happy."

"My mother loved my father. She made him happy. Had you seen them together——" Ange broke off and rushed out of the room without word of adieu.

The Vicomtesse left the monastery laughing loudly to cover her defeat. She rattled like a carriage-horse in a new and heavy harness. She jangled and rustled into the fiacre that was waiting without the walls, and Ange saw her no more for the present.

IV.

"COME, child, I wish thee to go into the country a little with me. The curate of our country church is ill and needs help. Get thy hat and thy staff and let us set off."

The good Abbot had for a long time been thinking that Brother Pierre needed something else than the closeness of the cloister walls. If he were pining for the world, why, then, the sooner they discovered that fact the better. The gate clanged behind the two as they went into the narrow, sunny road, and they stepped smartly out. The day was warm but breezy, and Ange took in great whiffs of summer air as he walked along by the side of the good Abbot. After a silence of some moments—"Uncle Antoine," he said, "may I talk a little?"

"Yes, my child, I brought thee away to give thee a whole day's freedom. Sometimes I feel that thou art not for the conventual life, and before it is too late I wish thee to make up thy mind with no coercion from anyone."

"Is it true, Uncle Antoine, that the fortune my mother left me goes to the Church if I do not marry to please my father?"

"Yes, my child."

"Then let me congratulate the Church, Uncle Antoine."

"On what, child?"

"On the receipt of the money. It is a good as theirs now. I shall never marry to please my father."

"And why not, child?"

"Because, Uncle Antoine, I know well whom it is they wish me to marry, and I have other views for myself."

"Yes, and what are they?"

"Why, the Church, of course," replied Ange, smiling.

"Dear lad, thou hast no vocation. Thou art always breaking rules." Ange smiled again. There were certain rules which he delighted to break.

"Thy heart is not bad, my child, but thou art a spendthrift of

thy time. Good as our monastical life is for some persons, I see plainly that it will not do for thee."

"That depends, Uncle Antoine, on whom my neighbors may be."

"The neighbors. Dost thou not like thy deskmate, thy seat at the table?"

"I love them. Little Frère Jacque is already in heaven, and big Brother Anselme is trying hard to get there." He smiled and looked on the ground. He was not thinking of Frère Jacque and Anselme, but one sentence was as good as another to aid conversation. Just here there was a sound of rapidly approaching horses, and a high cart came in sight, bowling along the road. A gentleman sat upon the front seat, a groom behind, and towering high above them sat a girl who held the ribbons in her gauntleted hands, the whip horizontal in a truly British manner. She leaned a little forward; her hat shaded her eyes; she was smiling and laughing gayly to the gentleman at her side. "The only girl that I shall ever marry——" said Ange, and stopped. The horses were abreast of them now, and as they swerved aside he caught sight of a face that he well knew. They were back then!

"The only girl that you will ever marry will be the one your father wishes you to marry, Mademoiselle de Larmes," said the Abbot, and then, with a smile in response to the bow of the gentleman in the carriage, "Monsieur du Plessis and his daughter," he said; but Ange did not need this information; he had recognized Valentine.

"I will never marry Mademoiselle de Larmes," said Ange. "Let us talk no more of it, Uncle Antoine. My bride is destined to be the Church." Uncle Antoine sighed.

"Thou must have a vocation, after all," he said, "when the sight of so much beauty does not even touch thee. As thou knowest," continued Uncle Antoine as they plodded along, "I am not an advocate of marriage, else why should I be here?" He waved his hand backward towards the monastery towers. Ange did not reply. Vaguely there came to him, like the evanescent sweetness of the midsummer hay new mown, a half memory of words his mother had let fall of a certain Celestine whose marriage to a certain Monsieur Grollier had cut short the worldly life of dear Uncle Antoine. "But all things being equal," continued the Abbot, "and seeing that the conventual life does not fill thy soul as it should, it would seem as if it would be well to do thy father's bidding, marry, rear up a little family of souls who will swell the ranks of our beloved Church, one of whom perhaps will come to me to the monastery school before I am too old to receive him."

Ange shuddered at the idea of a tender little child of his going to that life, perhaps seeing some other girl as he had met Valentine, and

being drawn insensibly away from his duties and his vows, and suffering as he had suffered, as he was suffering now. He pictured the misery of that innocent youth, of his struggles as to which course to pursue, and he ejaculated under his breath, "God forbid!" but in so low a tone that Uncle Antoine could not hear and be hurt by the words.

V.

ONE day, a week or so after this outing, Ange was wandering aimlessly about the grounds, when he perceived that a ladder stood against the monastery walls. At once he proceeded to mount it, and was soon upon the roof. Mounting higher and ever higher, he came out upon an upper projection, where a man with a soldering-pot was running some lead into a crack in an angle. He watched this process for awhile, and then turned to take in the view. Ah! what a revelation! what a prospect lay spread out before his curious eyes. He could look into the Du Plessis garden. He could see the walks, the flower beds, and a gardener tying up some stalks. The smoke was curling from the chimneys of the great house. He caught from his elevated position the corner of a veranda, and was it—— Yes, the glimpse of a yellow skirt, which was brighter than he had ever seen it. The river was glancing and flowing beyond, and the flecks of sunlight were reflected upon the gown. Oh heavens! why had he not thought of this vantage-point before. To be sure, the ladder was seldom there. He would learn soldering, learn roofing, learn anything, rather than not come to this blessed spot and see her, though so far away. He leaned against the chimney and watched and waited. He saw her rise and go into the house, reappear with the black straw hat upon her head, the hat with the yellow roses, and descend the steps on the river side of the house, where she was lost underneath the thick foliage. But, oh, joy! it was not long before she reappeared on the shore. She was alone. Ah! that was her object. She was unloosing the painter from a tall stake; she meant to go upon the water.

The great wall of the monastery ran out into the river, on each side of the boundary, and there was no hope of getting from the monastery grounds into the place that lay next on either side.

Ange saw the girl push the boat away from the shore, spring in as she did so, and, taking up her oars, begin to row. The river was very low and she was evidently unused to propelling her own boat. She rowed awkwardly and carefully. Once she ran the bow of her boat up on a little, gravelly spit, and was some time in pushing it off again. As the boat was careened either to the right or the left, Ange alternately crouched or shivered, fearing that she would be thrown into the water, but the Saints preserved her, and she shot away from one bank only to run up on another. Ah, it was lovely watching her!

Ange wondered if he could wade round the end of the wall when the river was very low; but what should he do when he got there? The wall had seemed a proper barrier. Should he meet her face to face, without an obstacle to play propriety, how awkward it would be. He blushed at the thought of it. He watched her until she guided her boat back to the land. He saw someone come down to the shore; it was a gentleman. It might be her father, Monsieur du Plessis. He helped her tie her boat to the stake, and then they walked up to where they were hidden from view, his hand through her arm. He walked as if he loved her. His touch was a caress. Everyone must love her,—how could they help it! He was still watching when the solderer came and touched him on the arm. "It is time to go down," said he; "the sun has set some time since."

"Is the work all done?" asked Ange, scarcely knowing what he said.

"It is all done," said the man; "there is a small leak there in the corner, but it is too dark to see. I must attend to that some other day."

"I should like to learn to solder," said Ange. "I wonder if you could teach me?"

"Soldering is a very particular trade," said the man with that reverence for his occupation which all workers should feel, "but I think that you might learn in time. Come the next day I am here and I will give you some lessons."

"I will," said the young brother eagerly, as he descended the ladder behind him. "Only let me know when you are coming. Promise to let me know—promise!"

The workman thought the subject scarcely called for so much emphasis, but said: "I shall come again to-morrow. I will ask the Abbot to let you help me. I needed someone to-day; one of my pinchers rolled off the roof. You wouldn't mind climbing down for it if I lost it again?"

"I should delight in it," replied the young man, and added to himself, "if only I may climb up again."

It was early in the morning when they again ascended to the roof, and this time Ange really learned something about the art of soldering. At odd times he scanned the great house carefully; that was when the workman was bending over the places to be repaired. He saw that a window was open, and then someone came and stood there like a picture in a frame. She was too far off for him to be quite certain who it was, but she wore a yellow gown. Seeing this, he took his handkerchief from his bosom and waved it. After awhile he saw her look his way; then she reached behind her and took up something. Ah! it was a field-glass. She placed it to her eyes, and after a moment,

to his joy, a tiny bit of white was waved back at him. So she was there, she had not forgotten him! As he descended from the roof he made up his mind to scale the wall or to wade round its projection at the first opportunity.

VI.

BUT there were signs of a storm in the sky. There were purple clouds over there in the west. The rains were coming, and the river would be full. He must wait until it was low again before he tried to see her nearer.

That night the storm broke, and it raged for two days. The garden was flooded, the river ran broad and deep and was at its height. The ends of the wall looked very far away out there in that rolling, turbulent flood. He must wait many days before he could hope to wade round it. To solace himself he went into the chapel and played on the old organ. Its tone was sweet and full, and after he had played some of the fugues of Bach his fingers strayed through the rhythm of more modern music, and, letting them run over the keys, they fell into the "Cantique de Noel" of Adam, and as he played he sang aloud in a joyous voice, "The day when Christ was born,—The day when Christ was born!" He pressed the loud pedals at the ending, and the triumphant strains of the religious song rolled out through the time-worn aisles, and then when the sweet song had died away, it was the "Ave Marie" of Gounod which came from under those supple fingers, and with this he allowed his tenor voice to ring out clear and high.

There were footsteps in the gallery.

"It is a very noble interior," he heard in a man's voice, the voice of a gentleman. "Who is that playing?"

"One of the brothers, Monsieur."

"What is his name?" Ange gave a start—her voice, no other but hers! He half arose, then sat again. He would have no excuse for going up the stairs and joining them. Nor would it be allowed. Propriety demanded that he should retreat even now.

"His name is Jean, Brother Jean," said the custodian; "he is always playing down there. He is blind."

"A-a-a-ah!" the word was uttered with a sigh of disappointment, and then, as Ange listened, scarce breathing, the footsteps came down the stairway and stopped in front of the organ. He was hidden where he sat from the new-comers.

"I have always wanted to see the old place," said the stranger, "and so we took this stormy day. Do many people come here?"

"No, but we are always glad to have them." The cicerone did not suggest that a fee, usually left by visitors, was of benefit to the monastery.

"I should like to come again, papa."

Yes, it was her voice again. A bit of her skirt swept around the corner of the organ.

"We may, sometime, Valentine," said her father kindly.

"Why is the organ still?" asked she, and then she called, "Brother Jean, art thou still there? Play a little more, I beg."

"The brother has gone away, perhaps."

"Play a little for the gentleman, brother. It is a valuable organ, Monsieur, it was presented to the monastery in—— The font? Oh, yes, come this way," and then footfalls rang down the aisle.

Ange struck with trembling fingers again into the "Cantique of Adam." The hem of the skirt swept nearer and nearer. Then he saw the roses of her hat, then her hand was laid upon the projection, and then her face was close, closer, the eyes looking into his.

"Oh!" he heard her whisper, "you?" and there she stood, gazing into his eyes, and he, playing on, gazed into hers, and then he took up the strain with his glad tones, "A thrill of joy, the weary soul rejoices." And when he had finished the first verse and the interlude he began again in a beseeching voice,—

"Surely He taught us to love one another."

"He said you were Jean," she whispered,— "that you were blind."

"I am Ange," he sang. "I am not blind—if love is blind, then I am blind." If the old custodian heard the words, they were so covered by the peals of the music that their significance was not discernible.

Valentine stood gazing at the young musician, and, not removing her eyes from his face, she took from her bosom a sweet mass of mignonette. She trailed it across his hands as they played, and he saw, among some gems of value upon her finger, his mother's ring. Then she laid the mignonette upon the upper keys and whispered, "Do not forget me," then went to the front of the organ, for steps were returning, and Monsieur du Plessis was half-way down the aisle with the custodian. He turned and waved his hand towards the girl as if to say, "Here is something that I must see," and again she was behind the organ with the young novice. "Play! Play!" she whispered, "play on," and enwreathed him with her arms and pressed her lips to his brow, his hair. The music suddenly ceased. He had caught her in his embrace. He strained her to his breast, his heart. He gave her kiss for kiss.

"Do not be a priest," she whispered.

"I will never be a priest," came back the answer, as Ange slipped through the little black door.

The footsteps were returning. Monsieur du Plessis was again at the front of the organ asking, "Where is the organist? Did you frighten him away?"

"I think I must have," said the girl, with a happy smile.

"He is easily frightened, poor, dear Jean!" remarked the custodian. "He is blind, and he imagines that the female sex are all lying in wait for him. We seldom have ladies here. No wonder he ran away," and he looked with mystified gaze on the lovely face of the girl standing before him.

Ange went no more upon the roof; there were no more leaks and the ladder had been removed. He gazed up at it often and yearningly, wishing that he had but a sharp instrument long enough to reach some assailable and receptive point, and create a leak which he might mend. When he found an opportunity, he went into the upper rooms and examined the walls and ceilings to see if he might not find a place where the rain had come through, but there was no sign of anything of the kind, and he descended disappointed. He lived in a dreamland which was real, more real than his daily life. He went about his duties in a dazed sort of way, doing his tasks mechanically, thinking of but one thing. Ever before him was the girl within the yellow frame. He always saw her in the gown which she had worn when first he discovered her on the other side of the boundary wall. He wondered why he had not thought, in that one close, dear interview, to make a wish known as to their future. Alas! their moments had been so fleeting!

VII.

FATHER MATTHIEU was becoming seriously troubled about his young charge. He was growing more pale and thin. His large eyes looked out at the world with an unusual melancholy in their regard for one so young. He seemed to become more ethereal with each day that passed, and as the old Abbot blew his nose with emotion, he wondered if this darling child of his little sister was to go away as she had gone into the unknown, "for, after all," argued Uncle Antoine (not Father Matthieu, Abbot of St. Sulpice, it would have been heresy for him),—"after all, though we preach and teach of the other world, of streets with golden pavements, and harps, and crowns, what do we know of it, we, down here. Perhaps it is just another room into which we pass, watching always to see whether we can aid those dear ones whom we have left behind us here."

The Abbot thought sometimes of writing to the lad's father, but he knew what that would entail. It would bring down upon him another whirlwind, whose earthly name was Belle-Sœur, and that was a thing which he could not endure.

The work of Ange was nominal now. He had a continued cough, slight, but persistent. The physician of the convent had ordered him to relinquish all study, and to remain as much as possible in the outer air.

He haunted the vicinity of his former vantage-point in the boundary-wall. Sometimes he would call softly, first assuring himself that no one was abroad within the monastery grounds, "Are you there?" then after waiting for a little he would call again, "Oh, tell me! Are you there?" but nothing came to reward his eager yearning. Once he heard a scraping against the stones on the other side, and looking, breathless and eager, towards the coping, he saw first a hand appear over the top, and then his heart sank, for it was the gnarled hand of an old man, the gardener of the domain of Monsieur du Plessis, and then a grizzled head came in sight and he heard a voice saying, "Did anyone call?"

Ange busied himself among the flowers; when finally he lifted his eyes he replied, "There is no one here but me."

Ah! to think that the old man might see her every day—hear her voice—be near her—while he was banished.

"And what are you planting, brother?" asked the old man.

"They are the purple flowers that come from the Valley of the Loire," answered Ange, finding it impossible to remain silent.

"Those are the new blooms that I heard talk of the other day," said the old man jealously.

"I can give you some if you wish. These are mine," said Ange with painful remembrance, and then recalled too late the rule of St. Sulpice that no one should speak to a stranger. "I have broken so many rules—I am breaking them all the time—what matters it if I break a few more?" he mused. "How could I give them to you?" asked the young brother.

"I hardly know," said the man, "unless you throw them over."

"I will throw them over," said the lad. "I will make a parcel and throw them as near as possible to where you stand. Where will you plant them?"

"Probably in the garden of Mademoiselle,—she loves flowers, she is always asking for some new varieties,—and in exchange I will drop here over the wall some fine bulbs which have lately been given me. Mademoiselle will not miss them, she has so many. Monsieur du Plessis, her father, thinks nothing too good for her."

"Will you tell her, Mad-Mademoiselle, where you procured these?"

The gardener did not answer. "Ho, ho!" he said to himself.

The plants were exchanged, and on this Ange lived for a week. Then his being seemed to need some other stimulus. He watched ever for his friend, the gardener, but he came no more. The truth was that Father Matthieu had seen from his room in the monastery the exchange of plants. He told no one and prayed only for the lad, who could not help breaking the rules, but he dispatched a note to Monsieur du Plessis, and when the old gardener came it was to find that his

ladder had disappeared, and that he was ordered by his master to hold no more communication with the brothers on the other side of the wall.

"And what is the matter with them, these brothers?" asked Valentine, who was present at the conversation.

"Nothing is the matter with them, it is the Abbot's wish, and we are both too good Catholics, petite, to care to make it more difficult for him," and then Monsieur du Plessis added, "Come into the house with me." When they were seated in the sunny library looking out upon the river, Monsieur du Plessis said, "My dear, I wish to have another serious talk with you."

"I suppose it is about marriage, papa," said Valentine, pouting. "It always is. I hate the subject. I am happy with you—do not send me away."

"Nevertheless, we must talk of it, my child. You remember your dear mother left certain property to be yours when you should marry, the property to be sold, or a part of it, as soon after your marriage as possible. I am anxious for you to see it; I have been nursing it for you. You have more land than you need, my dearest child, and just now the property in that vicinity is increasing rapidly in price. It may go down again, such values fluctuate, but while land about there is selling at the present good rate and we have a fine offer from the Count de Clermont for some extra acres, it would be madness not to sell."

"And I must marry to sell my property. Why not keep the old place as it is, papa? We shall have enough."

"And the reason why," proceeded Monsieur du Plessis, as if she had not spoken, "the Count de Clermont wishes to buy it is that the two properties may march together. It is his son, you know, who——"

"Oh! oh! Papa, I have heard all this before. I will not marry Monsieur de Clermont. I have said so again and again."

"And what have you against the young man, my child? You have never seen him."

"That is quite true. I have never seen him, and neither do I wish to see him. I am quite content here, alone with my dear, dearest papa."

Monsieur du Plessis sighed. "Thou always lovest me to distraction when I speak of marriage, petite. Thou art an obstinate girl. I am going to Paris to-day. I shall call upon the De Clermonts, who are now there, and tell them they must wait a little."

"A little! They must wait forever, papa! Does this young Monsieur de Clermont, then, wish to marry me?"

Monsieur du Plessis looked down confused. "I—I—believe not, my child, but he has never seen thee. He would wish to marry thee

had he seen thee. He has gone, his mother tells me, to travel in Sumatra."

"If he has gone to travel in Sumatra, how could he marry me?"

"It does not take long to come from Sumatra, child, not longer than to have thy trousseau made. He will come if they cable him. His father can get him here on some other pretence, and then when once he has seen thee——"

"I will never see him," broke in Valentine. "Thou hast acknowledged the other day that he had some one else in mind, and I have other plans for myself."

"Other plans for thyself!" Monsieur du Plessis looked at the girl aghast. It sounded like those independent American women. "And how couldst thou make other plans irrespective of my wishes?"

"My plan is to stay here with thee, dearest papa, and never marry until the right one comes. If he does not come, I shall go into a convent." She thought of Abelard and Heloise, and felt that if Ange remained in the monastery, the convent was her only resource. Monsieur du Plessis arose impatiently. "There is the brougham at the door, I am going to Paris for a few days. Think it well over while thou stayest, or wilt thou come to Paris with me? Come and see the Clermonts, how charming they are. Jeanne can throw a few things into a box for thee."

"Throw a few things! Dost thou not know, papa, that the chifcons of girls take hours to pack. A bit of tissue paper between each two folds? Throw! No, no, papa, I must have at least twenty-four hours' notice before I can get away."

"I will wait for thee, child, another day; it makes but little difference."

"I do not care to go, papa. What would Tante Jocaste do with no one to pick up her stitches?"

"I cannot understand thy love for this old place. When I took it I feared that it would prove a dull home for thee, and thought no convent could be more so."

"I had Lola here for some time, papa."

"Yes, but thou hast been alone for weeks, and how thou canst support such loneliness——"

"I am never alone with thee, dearest papa." She clasped him around the neck and lavished on him those caresses which were languishing for their rightful owner.

VIII.

WHEN Monsieur du Plessis had driven away, Valentine sought her chamber, that upper room where she had stood one day, not so long ago, and had seen Ange wave his handkerchief from the roof. She

pushed the window outward and leaned against the frame of the door. There was nothing to be seen but the vacant roofs of the monastery and a bit of the garden, the rose-gardens of happy memory. How did Ange get up on that steep roof of the monastery? Why could she not do the same here, at home. She would try it this afternoon late, when the servants, their work done, would all be in another part of the house.

Valentine ran along the hall and mounted the upper stairs. She was soon in the attic,—that dark, large, dusty place, whose dim corners gave back such dismal echoes and seemed to reveal dim shapes. But no fear was strong enough to withhold her. She was up the ladder and on the roof so soon as she had been able to push back the scuttle.

The roof was a flat one, and she walked safely over to the chimney nearest the monastery and stationed herself where the trees did not obstruct her view. She looked between them. She could see a large part of the monastery grounds, and ah! who was there? Yes, some one was busy at work near the spot where she used to look through the wall. He raised his head. Ah! he saw her. There was no one near.

"Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle!" The sound was a smothered one, coming up through the opening in the roof. She had never heard Jeanneton's shrill voice softened before. She wished that it might always come to her dulled like this by passing through the floors. She waved her hand desperately and pointed towards the river. She could not tell whether the young priest had seen the motion. He stood as if spell-bound.

"Mademoiselle! Mademoiselle!" came again up the stairs, "the old Mademoiselle wishes to see Mademoiselle."

With a wave of the hand towards the monastery grounds Valentine ran back to the opening and was down in the garret, and had closed the scuttle before old Jeanneton had reached the attic floor.

"And what is Mademoiselle doing up in this dark old hole?" asked the ancient serving-woman curiously.

"I was trying to open the window in the roof, Jeanneton; it is very heavy."

"Too heavy for Mademoiselle. The tante wishes to see Mademoiselle; she has dropped her stitch again." Tante Jocaste was always dropping her stitches. Valentine ran down two flights of stairs and into her aunt's room. That lady, an invalid, was reclining in a wheel-chair. She looked very sad; there were traces of tears upon her cheeks.

"Crying?" said Valentine.

"For thy father, child, I miss him so, and I have again dropped my stitch." Valentine wished that she herself had as few troubles.

"I miss him too, dear tante, but there is no use in crying for milk that has been spilt, and chere papan often spills himself. We can do nothing about him; he will return in a few days."

"I have dropped my stitch, child," repeated the old Mademoiselle in a pathetic whine.

"I will pick it up, and then I must run away," said Valentine.

"I have something to attend to."

"Thou art always running away, child."

"It will not be for long, chere tante."

Valentine picked up the dropped stitch, and then flew out of the room and down the steps of the veranda. She ran to the stake where her boat was tied. The river looked very angry and full after the late rains, but Valentine had learned, she thought, a great deal about the handling of a boat.

IX.

It was growing dusk. She would row around to the edge of the wall, and see if she might not speak a word with Ange. Why should he remain in the monastery when coming out into the world would save her and him? She was surely not the one to broach the subject, but she knew that he loved her. She would tell him what her father had threatened. Papan was quite capable of doing very disagreeable things. Had he not whisked her off to a watering-place because old Alliot had told him of the young brother underneath the wall; and his remarks about the garden of Mademoiselle? No one knew what plan papan might be concocting up there in Paris—his dear Paris! As these thoughts and a hundred more raced through her head, she had untied the rope from the stake and had thrown the oars into the boat. The wall at the foot of Monsieur du Plessis's estate, the wall which ran parallel with the river and kept out the water, was some distance back from the farther ends of the boundary wall of the monastery. The river was smooth and still in here, more like a pond than a river. While Monsieur du Plessis had been at the place, the water had always been low. He had never seen it as high as now, and knew nothing of its power.

Valentine stood in the boat and pushed it out towards the end of the boundary wall. She was nearing the end, when suddenly the water became deep, she lost her balance because the oar did not reach the bottom, and sat down suddenly and rather ungracefully. Her first thought was, "I am glad that no one saw me." The second thought was, "There goes my oar; what am I to do now?" for as she was thrown from her upright posture the oar flew from her grasp. The little boat was now even with the end of the boundary wall, but instead of the sweet and calm-flowing river which she had seen from the house, she discovered all at once that the water was rushing quickly onward,

and she sat in her seat, her hands tightly clasping the sides of the boat, her frightened eyes staring straight ahead. She had passed the boundary wall now, and was opposite the monastery grounds, but even the thought of Ange, and her wonder as to whether he had obeyed her gesture, could not recall her gaze from the wild sweep of waters ahead. And as she sat thus, terrified and helpless, she heard just behind her a voice that she knew, saying, "Sit still, I will guide thee to safety." She dared not turn her head. Every motion, in the eyes of this novice, seemed to endanger the steadiness of the boat. She heard some splashes in the water behind her, and heavy, excited breathing, and she knew, without seeing, that Ange had the stern of the boat in his hands and was swimming with it and guiding it as best he could.

Then she glanced sidewise and saw that they had passed the monastery grounds, and that higher banks stood up on either side. The river was narrowing ahead of them, there were rocks in mid-channel. They loomed up before her one by one, an incessant and fearful panorama. She wondered how long Ange could keep her from being thrown into the flood. The answer came as if she had spoken aloud.

"Sit quiet," he said reassuringly, "I can guide the boat."

The teaching that Ange had obtained in childhood stood him in good stead. His father's home at Valençon was a perfect place for lessons in rowing, and confidence and his old time knowledge now came back to him.

They raced onward for perhaps a quarter hour. A rushing river will carry a small skiff a long distance in a quarter hour.

"Dost thou see those rocks upon the right?" called Valentine in a terrified voice, raised to carry above the noise of the rushing waters. For answer, Ange guided the boat towards the left bank, when suddenly there was a scraping sound, the prow had run upon a sandspit which was just covered by the water. Ange crawled along to the bow, holding on by the gunwale of the boat, and then climbed up by the side and stood on the sandspit. The water was only ankle deep. He glanced into the interior of the little skiff and gave an exclamation of dismay.

"What is it?" asked Valentine anxiously.

"A hole."

"A large one?"

"No, but there is an indentation on the outside. The boat would sink if we put out again. Besides, we have no oars, and why should we go on?"

"Could we not cross the stream to our own side?" asked the girl. For answer Ange pointed to the cliffs which inhospitably lined the farther banks.

"You must get out," he said, "and come ashore with me."

"What! Step into the water?"

"It is not so bad," laughed Ange, "as being thrown into the water whether one wills or no." He wrung out his soaked garments and measured the distance to the shore with his eye. "I could carry you, perhaps." She noticed that he did not say *thee* and *thou*, as when he had let his first excitement at being alone with her carry him away.

"Oh! no, no," said Valentine, "you are not strong enough. You are ill, I am certain, your face is so thin, your eyes so large. What have they done to you?"

"See how foolish I was not to have eaten and drunk when they urged me," exclaimed Ange in disgust. "I should have been strong enough to carry you in that case, now I fear you must walk. But we never know what is coming to us. I will walk to the shore, and see if it grows deeper."

Ange turned back and walked along on the shallow rise of sand. She watched him approach the shore. As he neared it he was hardly in the water at all and stepped out on dry land. He turned and called to her: "Now I am coming back to hold the boat steady. Any movement may send it off in deep water."

"Come, then," called the girl, "but do not look."

"I will not look," said Ange, blushing, he knew not why. He waded out towards the boat, and, crouching, held the skiff firmly with both hands.

"But your clothes will be soaked," cried Valentine. Then she remembered that he had been almost submerged in the water on the voyage down the river. As Ange, all wet, came towards the boat, he held his face awkwardly but persistently towards the shore. He stooped and grasped the boat. He was fearful that the little skiff would be overturned because of the jerks and quick movements which he felt as he held the gunwale, and because of the water's rush.

Finally she said, "I am ready."

"Step to the front of the boat," returned he, "and get out; my eyes are closed." She obeyed him and stepped, with a little shiver of delight, into the water. Then he arose, letting the boat go, and, passing her carefully by, said: "Follow me; hold up your skirts; there is no danger, the spit is quite wide."

Valentine gathered her skirts high, and held them and her shoes and stockings in both hands, and thus they walked towards the shore, she following the young brother. Once she made an exclamation of dismay, but he did not turn his head. When they reached the shore he said: "I am going a little way along the beach. When your feet are dry and you are ready, you can call."

Valentine sat on a warm rock and dried her feet upon her white

petticoat. When they were again covered she called to Ange. She heard a crashing through the underbrush, and in a moment he appeared. Then he sat down on a rock facing her, and they both burst into a peal of laughter. After they had laughed excitedly for a few moments she said to him,—

“What to do next?”

“I hardly know,” he replied. “I do not know the river at all.”

“Nor I,” said Valentine; “we are strangers here. My father took the place only for the summer.”

“We can start and walk,” said he. “There is a bridge, I know, far up above the monastery. We can cross that and come down through the town. It will take us many hours.”

“I cannot walk,” said the girl. “I have lost one of my shoes. It went sailing down the river in company with the boat, and in coming ashore I have stepped on something sharp; it felt like glass; my foot is bleeding.”

Ange regarded her anxiously. “What shall we do?” said he. “We cannot stay here, and I cannot leave you alone; you cannot remain alone. Was there ever so hopeless a case?”

Valentine began to look serious. “I am terribly hungry too,” she said. “Do you think there might be a farmhouse near?”

“I will go and look in a little while,” said Ange. “At present I must find some leaves in which to bind your foot. We used to find them on the shores of the lake at Valençon,” and he started into the wood.

It was growing dark now. “Do not leave me alone,” called the girl in an anxious voice.

“I must try to find the leaf while some daylight remains,” he answered; “be patient. I will whistle once in a while, that you may not feel so lonely.”

Valentine tried to restrain her fears. Once she thought she heard a rustling in the bushes near her, and, to add to her nervousness, the river ran turbulently. What if it should get higher, and suddenly flood the place where she sat—she had heard of cloud-bursts. When it had grown quite dark, and her patience was nearly exhausted, she heard a plunging through the leaves and grasses, and the youth emerged out of the darkness.

“I cannot find it,” he said sorrowfully. “What shall we do?”

“I must try to walk,” said she. “You must help me.”

She arose from her rock and laid her hand upon his shoulder. She waited. He did not draw nearer. “You must help,” she said again. “I can barely stand.” He stooped his tall height that her hand might rest on his shoulder. She felt his frame tremble underneath her touch. Ah! what was this delicious wave of feeling which swept over

him? Was it because of the evanescent perfume of old lavender about her draperies? Was it because of the caress of her hair, like the finest of cobwebs, which now and then swept his cheek as he bent under the pressure of her hand?

"You do not help me," she complained.

"I can help you in no other way," said he. "Try your best to come. I saw a hut down there when I was searching for the leaves. It may be a charcoal-burner's. We may find a place for you there?"

"Why cannot you help me better?" He heard the tears in her voice, but made no answer.

"Have you forgotten——"

"No," said he, "I have not forgotten,"—the organ loft was never absent from his mind,—"but you had your father with you then, now you are alone."

"Still, I can hardly walk this way, you offer so little support."

"Clasp both your hands on my shoulder, then. There! so! is not that better?" and then,—"*Does your foot pain you so much?*"

"Yes, I really cannot press the ball to the ground. These stones hurt me too. I think there is a piece of glass in it. It is swelling rapidly."

The feeling of joy which possessed the youth at being so near the goal of his desires was overcome in a measure by his sorrow for her sufferings. He groaned with her at every step that she took as he felt her shrink. Finally, his anxiety for her overcoming all prudence or ideas of propriety, he put his arm about her waist, and she leaned upon him, both trembling in the ecstasy of their happiness; and thus they proceeded towards the hut of which he had spoken.

During the last part of the way she stopped once or twice, saying that she really could not go a step farther, and finally they seated themselves upon a rock near a little brook while he bathed her foot in the stream. A faint gleam in the eastern sky showed them that the moon was about to rise, and when its light peered through the branches enough for them to see they arose and proceeded on their way again.

The charcoal-burner's hut was not far away from the river.

"I am glad of that," said Ange, "for then I shall be able to bring you water for your foot." When they were near the refuge he left the girl standing beside a tree supporting herself against it, while he went on to the hut. He tried the door, and was agreeably surprised to discover that it would open from the outside. It was cleaner than he expected to find it, but he brushed it out as well as he could, making a broom out of some grass which was growing near by, and then came out and began to gather up the early-fallen leaves of summer.

"I should never have thought that leaves would have fallen so early," said he, as he passed by the place where Valentine was resting.

"We always think of trees shedding their leaves in September and October, but look! as a fact, I have found all that I require for your bed."

"My bed?" said Valentine. "Am I then to go to bed?"

"Yes," said he. "Come and see."

Again he placed his arm around her, trembling in the exuberance of his joy, and led her to the door of the hut. He built a tiny fire for cheer and light. The charcoal-burners had left their matches lying there, and Valentine exclaimed gratefully, as she gazed at the romantic exterior:

"Oh! oh!" she said, "I have always wanted something to happen! How delightful, how romantic!" She entered and seated herself in front of the blaze upon the high-piled cushions made of the leaves that had fallen early. He stood in the door-way. "And you?" she said.

"I shall have to keep watch upon the door-step. Perhaps I shall make a fire for myself and dry my clothes. The night is not cold, but a fire will not be unpleasant."

"And suppose anyone comes?" said the girl.

"I will keep watch," said Ange. Then he essayed to close the door, but it sagged, and he could not close it tightly.

"No matter," said Valentine, "I feel less lonely so." She lay down on the couch of leaves and gazed at the fire. Occasionally she laid upon the glowing wood a small fagot from the pile that Ange had laid beside the hearth. Then her eyes became drowsy, they began to close; then she started up, wide awake. "Ange," she called hurriedly, then looked towards the door to see that he was not there. She dragged herself towards the opening and saw that the forest was lighted up by the little fire that he had made for himself, and went and lay down again. After awhile she heard a tap beneath the tiny opening which served for a window.

"Do not come,"—it was the voice of Ange,—"I am drying my clothes down there; you should see them steam. I am watching you and the hut, both, all the time."

"Ange," she called, "do you know what my father wishes to do with me?"

"To marry you, I suppose," he answered.

"Yes. How did you know?"

"All fathers wish to do the same," said he. "I used to read some books before I went to the monastery."

"And to whom, do you think?"

"I don't know. Whoever he is, he is not worthy of you, and, more than that, I shall kill him as soon as you are married to him."

The girl laughed a joyous, musical laugh.

"I shall never marry him," she said, "never! Do not fear, he is in Sumatra; they are sending for him."

"When will he arrive?" asked Ange anxiously.

"I do not know. I will look on the map when we get home again. I should think it will take some months for him to arrive."

"Well, he cannot marry my wife, and thou wilt be my wife before that, Sweetheart," said Ange.

"Shall I?" Valentine gave a long sigh of pleasure.

"That is not the worst of it," said Ange; "they wish me also to marry."

"Do they, and to whom?"

"To a girl I never saw, but I will not marry her. Never! Never! Never!"

"One never knows what influence may be brought to bear. What is her name?"

"I do not know. Oh, yes, now I remember; it is a Mademoiselle de Larmes."

"Mademoiselle de Larmes!"

"Yes, I remember the name, it was impressed on my mind because the sound of it caused me to shed tears; but I tell thee this, I will not marry her."

Ange heard a sound as if the girl were sobbing.

"Mademoiselle de Larmes!" she exclaimed, and sobbed again.

"Do not fear, Sweetheart. I swear I will never marry this Mademoiselle de Larmes."

Valentine sat quiet for a time.

"Of what are you thinking?" said Ange.

"Oh, nothing," said Valentine, laughing, with a mischievous light in her eye, and then, after a few moments of silence,—

"Did you ever play a practical joke, An—Ange?"

"No, I should not know how," said Ange, looking up adoringly at her.

There was a long silence. "She is giving herself time to recover," said Ange to himself; in reality, she was reflecting.

"Do not be rash, Ange, do not swear. The Bible says, 'Swear not at all,' and now good-night." A long sigh. "Ah! I am so happy!"

"Good-night, Sweetest, the angels guard thee. My clothes must be dry. Good-night. Good-night." The youth's mode of address was tempered by circumstances; while the walls of the hut separated them, he did not fear to say to her thee and thou.

When Ange had dressed himself in his still damp clothes, he beat out his fire and, returning, laid down at the door of the hut. Once Valentine awoke and looked restlessly about her. She was frightened; she could not remember where she was. She reached out a little way

and peered through the crack, where the door would not close. The moonlight was shining brilliantly, and in its rays, along the step which led up to the hut, she saw the young brother sleeping soundly. The step was not much harder than his own bed at St. Sulpice.

"Do not be afraid, Sweetheart," she murmured, "I will never marry that man in Sumatra. Be not afraid, only thee, only thee."

The sun was coming over the hill when Valentine awoke. The sound that awakened her was the pushing open of the door, and Ange entered the hut without glancing towards her.

"What is it?" said Valentine, looking up with sleepy eyes.

"I am going for your breakfast," he said. He took down from the shelf a pail of tin and went out at the door. Valentine lay dreaming, when again she heard him knocking at the door. She sat up.

"See," he said, "I have brought your breakfast." He sat a pail full of milk just within the door. "I have milked a cow that was down in the wood. She strayed from the pasture on purpose for you." He laughed gayly. "There is no bread, but we may get that later." When she had drunk she asked,—

"How far are we from home?"

"About five miles, they tell me."

"They tell you? Whom hast thou seen?" bending forward and withdrawing again, blushing furiously that she should have touched him.

"I have been interviewing the family of the charcoal-burner," he said. "They live just beyond the bend of the river. The husband has gone away for some work to the village above your house. The wife says that the monastery is about five miles up the river. She is baking some black bread now. It will be done in an hour's time. I confessed them all. They have not seen a priest for a half year. We are in a very lonely spot.

"You confessed them? You are not a priest yet," said Valentine.

"No, I am not a priest yet, but I may be sometime if thou shouldst marry the man from Sumatra——"

"And thou shouldst marry Mademoiselle de Larmes," said Valentine, laughing gayly, and blushing again at her slip.

"And their sins are not very bad ones, why not I, as well as another? Are we not told, 'Confess ye your sins one to another'?"

"But that does not mean a novice who will not marry Mademoiselle de Larmes."

"They are satisfied, and I shall confess it to Uncle Antoine."

"And who is Uncle Antoine?"

"My uncle, the Abbot. But I must go back; I think the bread must be baked. Drink all the milk, I can get more." She drank the milk, and lay down again as he went on his way.

X.

WHEN the young man had quite gone away Valentine limped down to the river. As yet no one was awake but the larks and the bees, and she disrobed herself and bathed in the gray water. She watched the pearly, opalescent drops as they ran off her fingers, she thrust her head down into the water, and then shook her hair until it rolled up into a thousand brown curls, and then when the sun arose she dried herself in its beams. When she was again dressed, she took up her slow march towards the hut. As she neared it she saw Ange hastening through the wood.

"I have a plan," he called before he met her, almost breathless. "The charcoal-burner has not returned, but they have a superannuated horse, and I have borrowed him for your homeward journey, for you know—you know"—he looked at her from tender brown eyes—"you cannot remain here."

"No, I suppose not," said Valentine regretfully. She looked around her at the leafy seclusion. "It is lovely, though."

"For a day, yes," said Valentine. "But no one must see you. I will get what food the good woman can spare and bring it to you, and when it is quite dark we will start home to the château, you on the horse, I leading him for fear of harm to you."

This is no Swiss Robinson tale where roasts of beef and loaves of bread grew ready to the hand. The fare that the good woman at the hut was able to spare these runaways was of the simplest kind. Ange was ashamed to take from her all that he needed to fill two hungry mouths. He saved half his share for Valentine, and watched her with pleasure shining from his eyes as she ate.

"You seem to enjoy my eating," said Valentine, "and yet you have a hungry look."

The young brother smiled and turned away his head. He could have eaten double the share provided for the girl.

The day was passed by Ange in scouring the woods, looking for a place where they might reach the highroad without going near the house of the peasant woman, feeding the old horse and watering him down by the river, in milking the cow, and doing small service for his benefactress of the hut in return for her favors to him. When at last it was dusk, he led the horse into the wood, and knocking on the door of Valentine's retreat, he called,—

"Come forth, sweet lady. Your steed is at the castle door." Valentine, limping towards the door-way, laughed merrily when she saw the ancient beast of burden. With the help of Ange she mounted, seating herself comfortably on the saddle of hay that he had fashioned for her. Ange took the bridle and chirruped to the old horse, but he turned his head whinnying, and Valentine turned hers also.

"Who are those?" she asked. Ange, who was on the farther flank of the animal, said, "Who are what?" and ran around to the other side.

"Those," said Valentine, indicating by a nod of her head a group in the middle distance.

He looked towards them, and saw the charcoal-burner's wife standing there, her three or four children clinging at her skirts, fingers in mouth, gazing with interest at the pair.

"So that is where my bread went," said the woman. "The girl must have a fine appetite."

Ange, seeing that there was no longer any chance of concealment, walked towards her, the obedient horse following.

"My good woman," he said, "I did not tell you that my sister was there in the hut, because we have run away for a little holiday, before she is married, and she wishes no one to know."

The woman stood with folded arms and a severe look, formed by the screwing up of both mouth and eye.

"His sister!" she said, and nodded her head several times, tapped her foot on the ground, and laughed. And now the horse, being near Valentine, bent down towards the woman.

"I am his sister" ("before God," she inwardly added). "See, do we not look alike?" The woman gazed long into the gray eyes and said, with a shrug of the shoulders, "I see no resemblance, not the least in the world." Valentine felt in her pocket. Her purse lay there, and between its meshes she felt some hard pieces of coin. She deliberated for a moment.

"No," said she to herself, "I will not bribe her; that makes it seem really wrong, while we have been but the toys of circumstance, but I will pay her later."

"I see that you doubt my brother and me," she said, "but when my father learns of our escapade, he will come and tell you that it is all as it should be. I have done wrong; it was but a little foolishness on my part which time will cure. When I am married I shall come to see you and bring the children some dresses, perhaps a Christmas-tree when winter comes on."

"Ah, maman!" said the little ones in chorus, removing their thumbs from their mouths long enough to speak—"a Christmas-tree! think of that."

"The woods are full of trees," said the woman. "It is the things to hang upon it that worries me from now on."

"Do not worry any more," said Valentine kindly, "I shall see that you have gifts in plenty. What would you like, little one?" leaning down from the back of the old gray and patting the youngest on the head.

"Shoes," said the other three in chorus, their little toes wiggling about argumentatively among the leaves of the woodland.

"Shoes it shall be," said Valentine, laughing, "and dresses and bonbons and sweets, and dried fruit. Dost thou love that, little one? Say, Bébé," and then she turned the horse's head. "I shall send the horse back to-morrow," she said, "and the money to pay for my ride. How much shall I send you?"

The peasant woman pondered, and then asked, somewhat timidly, "Would three francs be too much?"

"I will send ten," said Valentine, at which the woman wished that she had asked twenty, when she might have received thirty, perhaps.

"And now good-by," said Valentine, and turning away again, the two began their journey through the woodland path and were soon lost in the depths of the forest.

Ange guided the horse or walked beside him. The air was sweet with mint and the honey-suckle vine, which the horse crushed with his heavy feet, and Ange thought it bliss just to walk by his side. Sometimes he leaned his dark head against the skirt which flowed down over the flanks of the animal, and pressed his lips among the folds.

After a half-hour they came to the main road and turned up stream towards the direction of the bridge of which Ange knew. When they came opposite the monastery the moon had risen, but the great pile lay dark and gloomy.

"I wonder if they miss me," said Ange half-aloud.

"Who would not miss thee?" said Valentine, laying her fingers on his dark head. He turned and pressed his lips to her hand.

"You must not," said Valentine.

"You are out of my reach," said Ange. "Let me have this little consolation—remember after to-night I shall see thee more." They crossed the bridge and turned downward again along the road leading through the sleeping town. No one was abroad, but as they passed by the auberge the door stood open, and two yokels lounged within. They looked at our pair of travellers curiously, and one said, "If I did not know that my old white horse was safe at home with my wife, five miles down the river, I should say that was he."

At these words Valentine gave the horse a little blow with her heel, and Ange ran along beside her until the danger was past. They thought this must have been the charcoal-burner, but said nothing, so frightened were they.

And now they were approaching the gates of the château. This Ange did not know, but Valentine, who had come this way from the railroad station in the town when she arrived, recognized the entrance at once and whispered, "Here I am."

The large gates were still open. "That argues that papa is expected from Paris to-night," said Valentine in a low tone. There sounded the whistle of an approaching train.

"He may be coming now," she whispered. She leaned down towards Ange. The ilex-trees were dark overhead, the shadows were deep.

"When shall I see thee again?" she said.

"To-morrow. I will come to-morrow," said he. "Nothing shall keep me away from thee. Oh Valentine, my love, do not let them marry you to that man who is in Sumatra."

"And shall they marry thee to Mademoiselle de Larmes?" laughed Valentine mischievously.

"Never," said Valentine, "never!"

"What wilt thou wager me?"

"The ring of my mother's which thou hast. It is thine in any case; it is doubly thine if I marry Mademoiselle de Larmes." He laid his chest against her knee, then released her."

XI.

HE watched the girl ride safely round to the open stable, where he saw a light and moving figures, and then he walked laggingly onward towards the monastery. He did not expect to get inside the grounds so late, but, strange to say, as he reached the great iron grille, the little gate cut in the mass of wrought iron was open, and within the opening stood a monk. That monk was the Abbot, Father Matthieu. As his young nephew stepped out before him in the moonlight and the bright rays fell upon his face, "Ah, it is thou," said Father Matthieu, and he looked at the lad long and earnestly. "Where hast thou been?"

"I will tell thee, Uncle Antoine, if thou wilt let me come to thy room and but give me some food. I am weary and hungry."

The Abbot led the way inside, first fastening the small door, then rang the bell that the great wooden gates might also be closed. He did not speak to the young brother until he had gone himself to the refectory and brought from a cupboard some bread and a glass of the simple wine allowed the convent-bred in France. Then when he had returned with it, and the lad had eaten and drunk his fill, he looked at him long and questioningly. "Well?" he finally said.

"I have broken the rules again, Uncle Antoine," said Ange. "I went on the river in a boat. It carried me away, many miles away. It was wrecked on a rocky spit. I had to wade ashore. I was tired and drenched. I got food of a poor woman. I had no money to give her, but thou must send her something,—thou wilt, I know,—and then I—I—walked home."

The good Abbot looked sadly at his nephew. "I see that thou hast no vocation," he said. "Thou shalt go home to-morrow."

At this the young man flung himself upon the floor. "Oh, no, dear Uncle Antoine, do not send me away," he said, "do not! do not! I will work as I never worked before, if thou wilt only not send me away from this dear place."

"Thy affection for this place is ephemeral," said Uncle Antoine dryly. "No one can remain who behaves as thou dost. Thou hast broken all the rules of the school. The day after to-morrow thou shalt depart. I will telegraph to thy father. He will come and fetch thee."

"I am not a child," said Ange, "I can go alone."

"And wilt thou promise me that thou wilt go directly home to thy father and thy mother?" The lad hesitated, there was that visit to Monsieur du Plessis; well, that could be made on the morrow.

"I will go directly to my father the day after to-morrow," said Ange; "as thou sayest, I would I could go to my mother, she would understand me."

The old man drew the young towards him and kissed him.

"Ah, my poor little sister! I have tried to fulfil my duties to her," he said; "but I see that thy vocation is not here, child. The world is for thee, and when thou art a father call one of thy children Maline after her, and one Antoine, after me. Now, sleep, my son, for thou must be weary and the hour is late."

When Valentine arrived at the door of the stable the grooms looked at her in wonder. She explained hurriedly that she had been carried away in the boat, and that a good woman had loaned her a horse that she might reach home. Then she went into the house and was cared for by her maid and put to bed. She heard the carriage roll in at the gate and over the gravel of the driveway. She heard her father's voice as he came up the front steps, but her door was locked, and no one told him that his daughter had been away from home for a day and a night. At least not on that evening, but when Valentine limped into the breakfast-room the following morning her father looked very stern and angry, and Tante Jocaste in her wheel-chair by the window was shaking like an aspen leaf at the storm she had aroused.

Monsieur du Plessis sat staring at his daughter with an angry frown, which her light "Good-morning, papa," did not banish. She looked charming and sweet in her fresh white gown with blue ribbons, but on one foot she wore a little Paris shoe, on the other an old slipper of her father's. This fell off as she entered the room, and she painfully and awkwardly stooped and picked it up.

"Thou wert not down to early breakfast, Valentine," said her father.

"It is not the custom, papa."

"It has ever been the custom for us. Tante Jocaste, no, but thou and I, always."

"I—I—was tired, papa."

"Thou art lame."

"I—I—hurt my foot yesterday, papa."

"How?"

"I do not wish to say, papa."

"Tell me at once, Valentine, no subterfuge."

Monsieur du Plessis had never spoken to her in so harsh a tone. What did it mean? Who had been meddling? She glanced at Tante Jocaste. "If she did," Valentine thought, "I shall never take up another stitch for her."

"I have nothing to tell, papa."

"I go away and leave thee here with thy aunt and the servants, who are all devoted to thee. All goes well until yesterday afternoon just as I am going to the Elysées, to attend a reception for the Russian Crown Prince, when there comes a message for me, 'Come at once; we cannot find Valentine.' Imagine my feelings—I, who have never had to face such annoyances. What would thy mother have said, child? Thou knowest why I love thee so; it is for thy mother's sake, thy sweet mother, my devoted wife, to whom I promised that no harm should befall her little child, and now I cannot be gone twenty-four hours but I get a cry from home, 'Return! Return!'"

"Papa, dear, thou art always telling me that thou lovest me because thou hast adored so much my dearest maman. Why not love me a little for myself, papa?"

Monsieur du Plessis sat unmoved.

Valentine edged a little nearer him. She plucked at the lapel of his correct morning coat, and looked down into his eyes with a bewitching smile.

"Dost thou not think, papa, dear, that she knows all that we do and all that we say, and that she would keep thee in more loving remembrance if thou wert a little more kind to her motherless daughter?"

Monsieur du Plessis's eyes became at once suffused with tears, which he endeavored to prevent Valentine from seeing. He hardened his heart and replied, "Young girls do not know what is best for them, Valentine. What does it mean, child? Where wert thou last night?"

"Here at home in my bed," answered Valentine, delighted at this small defence. Monsieur du Plessis looked at Tante Jocaste as if to say, "Well, and what have you to say to that?" Tante Jocaste dropped another stitch and did not answer.

"Where wert thou yesterday?" demanded Monsieur du Plessis in what was intended for a very severe tone.

"I was in a hut in the wood, papa, a charcoal-burner's hut. It is about five miles below this, I think, but on the other side of the river."

"And what wert thou doing there, Valentine?" gasped Monsieur du Plessis, mouth and eyes both wide open.

"I was resting, papa. You see, I had hurt my foot, and——"

"Who was with thee? How didst thou get there? Where was thy maid? What wert thou waiting for? Where——" Monsieur du Plessis ceased for want of breath.

"How shall I answer thy questions, papa," said Valentine, a little frightened but with a provoking smile, "singly or collectively?"

"Do not be impertinent, Mademoiselle," answered Monsieur du Plessis. "First, what wert thou doing in the charcoal-burner's hut?"

"As I said, I was resting."

"How did thy foot become lame?"

"I cut it on a piece of glass, papa."

"Glass, and where?"

"In the sand at the bottom of the river, papa."

"And why shouldst thou be walking on the sand in the bottom of the river, may I ask?"

"To get ashore, papa."

"Ashore! Ashore from what? Surely this is like the old nursery rhyme that I learned from my English governess; it was called 'The house that Jack built'—from what? Ashore from what? answer me at once, Valentine."

"From our boat, papa. Let me tell you, sir, I am very sorry, but the boat is gone."

"Is gone! Gone where?"

"I do not know, papa; they say that all rivers find their way to large rivers, and they in turn to larger rivers, and they in turn to the sea. I do not know whether our little skiff is now floating in the Bay of Biscay or the Gulf of Lyons. You see, I have not studied my maps very well, papa, and I do not know what rivers flow north, which ones west, and which flow south."

"Cease this temporizing, Valentine, and tell me the truth. Who was with thee in the hut?"

"No one," said Valentine, her cheeks crimson. (He came in only once, she argued to herself, just to get the matches; that cannot be called being with me in the hut!)

"Who brought thee home?"

"The horse of the good woman, papa."

"Who led the horse?"

"One of the brothers at the monastery."

"So that is the mystery at last! What is his name? I will nip this idiotic flirtation in the bud, I will go to the Abbot, I will—What is this precious brother's name?"

"The day that thou and I went to see the church over there a brother was playing. I remember that the custodian spoke of him as Jean, and said that he was blind. That is the one who led my horse home. He would have died rather than let harm come to me."

"How can a blind monk lead a horse?" asked Monsieur du Plessis, all adrift through Valentine's extremely frank answers.

"I do not know whether blind monks are usually chosen to lead horses, papa. This one was certainly in a condition attributed to the blind, but he led my horse safely and brought me to the door last night."

"How did he happen to be at the hut of that woman?"

"He told me that he had been confessing her children," said Valentine.

"The ways of women are past finding out," exclaimed Monsieur du Plessis. "This comes of thy English schooling. Leave them alone in a desert island, and they will flirt with the apes in the trees; leave them next a monastery, and they will flirt with even a blind monk. Come, girl, pack thy trunks, I shall take thee away to-day. Young De Clermont is to be at home, his father writes me, in a few days, and thou shalt marry him within two months. I have just parted from the Count in Paris."

"Papa," said Valentine, her face suffused with blushes, the tears standing in her eyes, "if I thought monks such bad men I would leave the church at once. I do not wish to marry. I wish to go into a convent. I have some money, have I not? Let me give it to the cloister, and when I have for—~~for—~~gotten the—~~the~~ world—let me take—~~the—the~~ veil."

"Thou shalt never take the veil," said Monsieur du Plessis. "This is what comes of philandering with blind monks. I suppose it is pity that sways thee—pity and religion combined. Thou wert made for marriage, and love, and home-life, and my friend De Clermont's son can give thee all thou shouldst have. Our property marches with theirs. Come! I will order thy trunks packed." He arose and rang the bell. When the maid came, "Pack Mademoiselle's trunks and boxes," he said. "Lay in all her costliest gowns; she goes away with me for a long stay."

There was a sob from the corner. It was Tante Jocaste vainly endeavoring to pick up, with her lame and trembling fingers, the numerous stitches that she had irrevocably dropped.

"Ah, ha! and it is you, Tante Jocaste," said Valentine, "who

hast brought this on thyself. Thou wilt have to remain here alone until the servants can bring thee to Paris, and all for telling tales on a young girl who meant no harm."

"Thou shalt have no revenge on thy Tante Jocaste, Valentine," said Monsieur du Plessis, "she shall come with us; we will move to-day and leave the servants to pack the household things."

During the hours when the maid was packing Valentine's boxes, she endeavored to get up to the roof of the château to see if there might be a last wave of the hand from Ange. She wondered if he would come to speak to her father as he had purposed, but the pain in her foot, as well as the difficulty of raising of the great attic door, prevented. The Doctor came and dressed her foot, and she drove sadly away at four o'clock that afternoon to the station, en route for Paris. One night spent there, and the next day they were settled at the estate which marched with that of Count de Clermont.

Valentine was distrait; she would not talk, she would not eat. When she arose from the dinner-table, "Where is the gentleman from Sumatra?" she asked ironically.

"He promises to be here this week," said Monsieur du Plessis,—"rather, his father for him."

"He must be very much in love," remarked Valentine. "His haste is something wonderful. What could they do to me, papa, if I should say 'No' at the altar?"

"Thou wouldst never bring such disgrace on me, or thyself, my child. When once thou art at the altar thou wilt say 'Yes.'"

"Why not marry me to my other love, papa? My other lover?"

"I never heard that thou hadst another lover, Valentine."

"I thought—I heard—that someone else had asked for my hand," whispered Valentine, looking down.

"No one has asked for thy hand, only the Count de Clermont for his son. Come, child, be good, be wise, thou wilt love the young man when thou seest him."

"I will never love the man from Sumatra," whispered Valentine.

XII.

THE father of Ange was sitting with his second wife in the drawing-room of his house in Paris.

"I am actuated only by the wish of my son's welfare, Claudine," said her husband. "If we wait much longer, this marriage will be prevented by the lad's taking the irrevocable vows. I have written my brother-in-law, the Abbot, to prevent as long as possible his final decision. Lately he writes me that Ange has seemed strange, that he has broken the rules constantly. His illness seems to have changed

the child." The father sighed, thinking, perhaps, of the days when he and his little son were all in all to each other.

But that feeling was soon dispelled, for his wife arose, crossed the room, and came to his side. She laid her handsome hand, glittering with rings, upon his shoulder.

"Thou art worrying for nothing at all, Armand," she said. "The lad will soon get weary of the monastery. He looked thin and pale when I was there; he needs a change. Let us bring him home for a time."

"But what if he will not come? I cannot force him."

"And what about Mademoiselle de Larmes, Armand? I hope she does not know that Ange is in a monastery, rather that her father does not. He would think a young monk, even if reclaimed, a pretty sort of person to care for his daughter's property. As for my little Armand," said she, and looked tenderly at the child who was toddling about the floor, "he will be badly off, I fear."

"No, Claudine, not badly off. When Ange marries Mademoiselle de Larmes and the property that his mother left him passes to him (to the Church, as thou knowest, in case he does not marry as I wish), I shall feel at liberty to leave all that I possess to little Armand there. With the property which Mademoiselle de Larmes inherits from her mother, the two will have a larger rent-roll than you or I can ever hope to control."

"Well, that is right, dear Armand," said his wife. "Whatever was left to Ange I do not grudge him. My little lad will have all that is good for him."

"Wilt thou go with me to the monastery, Claudine, or shall I go alone?"

"Try thine own luck, my dear," said the wife, laughing. "I was not so successful the last time that I wish to go again." Her husband leaned back against her ample figure. She was firm as a rock. His head rested against a pillow of silk and lace, and he was smothered in perfumes of sweetest fragrance. He was a man given to retrospect, and sometimes he wondered how he could have been so happy with two women so entirely different as were his two wives. He often thought of his first wife, the mother of Ange, small, pale, insignificant looking, except for the glorious dark eyes which the lad had inherited, wrapt up in religion, her holy life, her ecstatic death; and then he looked at the other side of the shield, and saw a cheerful, fussy, handsome woman, large and splendid in her beauty, dressed to perfection, her hands and figure adorned with shining jewels, kindly, good-natured, loving him, perhaps, as well in her way as his first wife had in hers, and he wondered more than ever what either of them had seen in him that they should have shown him such real devotion. He speculated

sometimes upon the other world. He had heard it read in church that there was no marriage there, and no giving in marriage. He wondered if they, those who had gone before, would know those whom they had left on earth, and, if so, which of the women whom he had loved would claim him. He could almost see Claudine pushing Maline firmly aside, the first wife retreating gently into the background, and with the vision came a pathetic return of affection for the bride of his youth, and a feeling that he must take her in his arms and protect her from all slights; and then Claudine leaned down and kissed him, and he pressed his lips to hers with a longing sigh. Which of us know the thoughts of our nearest and dearest?

"As I told thee, my dear, I did not let them think that Ange was in a monastery. In the first place, the manner of his going there would cause me to appear in a not very pleasant light, and, in the second, they would feel at once that a would-be monk was no husband for so high-spirited a girl as Mademoiselle de Larmes. Oh, if he could only see her once!—her beautiful face and figure are of the most charming. I truly believe that they cannot be rivalled in the whole of France. She has all the accomplishments that a girl so well born and bred can acquire. She sings like a nightingale, she rides like a female Jehu, and drives a spirited pair of horses and even a four-in-hand; I have seen her, down at their country place at Chaillecourt, with her father sitting beside her. I wonder how many places they have? She can care for the house as well as any housekeeper. I have never eaten such breakfasts as they give at Chaillecourt. And she is an adept at games; she plays pool and billiards with remarkable skill, and sails a boat, they tell me, when they are at Cannes, allowing the owner to go along, as he insists, only for safety. Indeed, there is nothing that Mademoiselle de Larmes cannot do,—even skate, I believe, which is the accomplishment that I care for least of all, but then when Ange is once married to her that can be changed."

"I fear that Ange will never be married to her," said his step-mother with a sigh. "When dost thou go, Armand?"

"This afternoon. I shall sleep at the monastery and take the lad down to Valençon by the afternoon train. When canst thou meet us there?"

"It will require but a day or two to close the house here, Armand. I believe they are there now."

"Whom?"

"Mademoiselle de Larmes and her father."

"It will seem strange to have them for neighbors. How I wish they had lived there always, and Ange had grown up with her, then the matter would not be so difficult."

Monsieur de Clermont's decision and the Abbot's were reached at

about the same time, and the Abbot, when he met his brother-in-law, told him the whole story of the escapades of Ange so far as he knew them, with an accompaniment of much blowing of nose and shedding of tears, and when he had finished, and Ange was asked what he had to say in his own defence, he simply replied, "Nothing," and after a moment's pause added, "I would do it again, and yet a thousand times over, for the same provocation."

"It is plain that he has no vocation," said his father. "I never wished him to come here; his mother never wished him to come here."

"Because she thought it would leave thee alone," said Ange. "We talked of that before her death."

His father reddened unpleasantly. "Thou wilfully misunderstand me, lad. I speak of thy present mother, my wife."

"She never was my mother," said Ange. "I have not forgotten my mother, and I know that she has not forgotten me."

"He is obdurate," said the perplexed father. "This is no place for him. Come, it is time that we went," and they departed, Ange not without a secret yearning look at his old Uncle Antoine, who had been so good to him.

As his father passed out into the grounds of the monastery Ange ran back and threw his arms around the old man's neck, saying, "If I must marry, promise that thou wilt do it; not that I shall ever marry, Uncle Antoine."

The old Abbot kissed him. "I promise," he whispered, "but it is said by those of the world that it is not so unpleasant to marry," and then to himself, "Ah, he is weakening; continual dropping such as that of my belle-sœur will wear away even a stone so obdurate as the heart of my little sister's son."

XIII.

ANGE and his father travelled day and night. They did not go to Paris, but skirted it, changing at one or two junctions, and reached Valençon in the early morning.

The estate was the scene of the youth's childhood. Here he felt at home. Here he was happy as happy could be without the girl whom he loved with all his heart and soul. His stepmother was expected in the afternoon, and, snatching his short respite, he wandered out and sat and dreamed underneath the old beeches where he had carved his name as a child. While he sat there his father came to him.

"Thy mother is coming, Ange; she will be glad to see thee," he said.

"Ah, how I wish that I could see my dear mother," returned Ange; "she would counsel me what to do."

"My wife, then," said his father; "she arrives to-day. She is

going a little later to call upon Mademoiselle de Larmes, and wishes thee to go with her."

"I shall never call upon Mademoiselle de Larmes," answered the obdurate Ange.

"Be serious, child, be reasonable. What hast thou against this lovely girl, thou who hast never seen any young girls? She is charming, she is willing, thy Uncle Antoine will not have thee longer at the convent. What is there for thee in life but this?"

"What, indeed, is left for me when I cannot remain in my father's house?" said Ange gloomily; "though why I should be forced to marry, I cannot see. Why not leave me here alone, father, to dream my dreams—my happy dreams?"

"It will not do, my son," said his father. "There are many reasons, business reasons, why thou shouldst marry, and when thou gettest a lovely young wife and a fortune as great or even greater than that which thy mother left me in trust for thee, if thou shouldst marry as I wish, what better canst thou do?"

"Aye, what!" said Ange listlessly. He sat looking towards the waterfall which tinkled and droned and splashed into the pool behind where his father stood facing him. Suddenly he started and sat upright. Was it, could it be? Yes, there she stood, Valentine, up there by the side of the waterfall. She put her finger on her lip. "Your promise." Then, stooping, she placed something underneath a stone and disappeared in the bushes. The lad came back to earth to hear his father droning on about the necessity of the marriage, his desire to see his son happily settled, etc., etc., but Ange did not listen attentively. His eyes were fixed on the spot where he had seen the vision, his thoughts were with the girl who had so mysteriously appeared and disappeared behind his father's back. "And so, Ange," ended his father, "I wish you would come with me to call upon Mademoiselle de Larmes."

Ange, all eagerness to climb the height to seek for whatever Valentine had laid underneath the stone, which could not be done unless he could get rid of his father, said impatiently, as he arose: "Very well, father, I promise that I will go with thee to see this Mademoiselle de Larmes if thou wilt leave me here a little while alone, but I will not go to-day,—to-morrow, if I must; I wish to think the matter over, but I promise that within a half-hour's time thou shalt see me at the house, and I—suppose—I—shall—have to pay the promised visit, but to-morrow, father,—not to-day, to-morrow." Whereupon his father disappeared in the direction of the mansion.

When Ange had climbed up to the wooded cliff Valentine was gone. He looked disconsolately about him. Only the chirping of the summer birds and the splash of the tinkling waterfall answered his

earnest scrutiny. Then he began to regard particularly the rocks and stones at his feet. He turned over three with no result, but when he raised the fourth a paper fluttered at his feet. It was carried a little way from his eager hand by the breeze and hopped on like a wounded bird, but the young man was upon his knees, seizing upon it, holding it as if indeed it were a living thing that he wished to enfold securely within his tender grasp and yet do it no harm. When he had secured the paper he seated himself some way back from the edge of the cliff and opened it. The first words that met his gaze were, "You must promise me that you will not marry Mademoiselle de Larmes,—at least, not without my permission.

"Ah, Valentine du Plessis," he murmured, "thou knowest, dearest, that without thy permission I shall never marry that odious Mademoiselle de Larmes."

But how had Valentine come there? He had heard that her father owned a place, the Val de Chevreuse,—indeed, she had said as much. She must be staying near them then. This thought put new hope in his heart, and made him feel that he had not left the monastery in vain. He would watch and discover where his darling lived, and if nothing else offered, he would defy his father and hers. Together they would go to Monsieur du Plessis and to his father, insist that they loved each other and no one else, demand that they be married, and leave the man from Sumatra and Mademoiselle de Larmes to console each other.

"That is easily promised," said Ange, looking again at the words of the letter, and laughing aloud.

As a second thought, she had written a postscript: "Why not meet me in the woods above your waterfall? I will be there at five o'clock this afternoon. Now I am going out to try to get this message to you in some way. If I do not see you, I shall dress as a beggar or as a sister,—how would that do?—and go boldly to your father's door and leave the note." And then the words, "Answer, and leave the answer where you find this." This last sentence had evidently been written in haste, and perhaps after Valentine had arrived on the spot, for Ange discovered all at once on the ground, reposing upon a large leaf, a little yellow pencil.

He seated himself at once, and taking a small account-book from his pocket, he tore out a blank page and wrote upon it: "I will be here by five o'clock. Do not fail me, dearest. I am growing to have an absolute terror of that Mademoiselle de Larmes."

Then he pursued his walk a little way, but seeing nothing of Valentine, no traces of her in any direction, he turned towards home and climbed down the cliff.

When he reached the house he found his father reading a telegram.

"It is from thy mother," he said; "she cannot come until to-morrow."

"My mother has sent me many a message," said Ange, "but they do not come in the daytime, the night rather. They are not written on blue paper, nor, indeed, written at all, except on my heart."

"Do not be absurd, my son. As the messenger came up the avenue, I thought he feared it was some ill news."

"It was," answered Ange coldly, "the news that your wife is coming. My messengers, those from my mother, are invisible."

"Thou art incorrigible," said his father. "I do not need that thou shouldst remind me of thy mother."

"I must," said Ange, "since there is no one who remembers her but me."

His father sighed. "I have not forgotten her, Ange. It may seem so, but I have not. She is still very dear to me."

"I doubt if thou hast told thy second wife so."

"What would be the use, child, she would not understand it; it would hurt her unnecessarily."

"Does it ever occur to thee, father, how my mother has been hurt, time without number, since she left us?"

"She is a spirit, dear child. Do not insist on thinking of her as a worldly, jealous creature, such as thou and I never knew. Thou knowest as well as I that if she thought I would be happier so, she would be glad. Thou knowest there is no marriage nor giving in marriage in heaven, Ange."

"I wonder where they will put my stepmother," said Ange the incorrigible, with a grin.

"I am chiefly sorry that thy mother — ahem, my wife — cannot arrive to-day, because I wish thee to go to see Mademoiselle de Larmes as soon as possible."

"I think we can both of us wait," replied Ange with another grimace.

"It shall be to-morrow, in any event," said his father sternly.

"We shall see about that," whispered Ange to himself, thinking of his rendezvous for that afternoon at five o'clock.

And how the day dragged to the impatient lad! How long the hours were in passing! how slow the clock in striking! but at last, at last, it was half-after four o'clock, and he could start for the waterfall.

When he reached the front door, there stood a groom holding a fine cob as well as a handsome horse, and just as Ange emerged from the house his father followed him rapidly down the steps.

"I thought it would be pleasant to ride the pony, rather than a newer horse, Ange. See how young he keeps, and how glad he is to see thee!"

The horse whinnied and rubbed his nose against the young man's sleeve, who caressed him in return. Ah, how it recalled to him the old days, his mother coming out to give the pony some sugar before he started off with her little son for a ride!

"I cannot ride, father, I have no clothes," he said coldly.

His father looked deeply disappointed. "True," he said, "but thy clothes will be here to-morrow." He mounted as he spoke. "Wilt thou keep the old horse, my son, or shall we get a new one?"

"That will depend altogether on circumstances," said Ange, thinking of his approaching interview.

He waited until his father had ridden away and the groom had taken his own horse round again to the stable, and then he walked rapidly towards the wooded part of the estate, and was soon on the top of the cliff over which fell the sparkling waterfall.

He had not long to wait before the bushes were pushed aside, and in the distance he saw Valentine approaching.

"How long have you been here?" she cried. "I had to wait to try on a dress in which to meet to-morrow that tiresome man from Sumatra."

He hurried to meet her. He tried to take her hands in his, but that she would not allow, nor that he should approach her nearer than a stranger. He was surprised at this. "But why not, dearest?" he said. "Why should you change so all in a moment?"

"I am not changed, Ange, do not think it," said Valentine gravely, "but I have been pondering very deeply since we met, and I see that our escapade was one of some seriousness. My father says that if it should become known, the gentleman from Sumatra would never marry me. My father knows that I was away an entire night and nearly two days. The history of those days I have not given him, but the servants have talked, and that, you know, casts a slur upon me from which I may never recover."

"I sincerely hope that he will refuse to marry you," said Ange hotly; "we each know that there was nothing——" and then both the young, innocent creatures looked down and blushed.

"He knows that a monk brought me home," said Valentine, "but he does not suspect who. I am afraid I have not been absolutely truthful—I have made him believe that it was a blind monk named Jean. I told him that he was blind; they say that—that—dare I say it?—that love is blind." When she had uttered these words she covered her eyes with her hands, and Ange saw the red of her blushes between the openings of her fingers.

"Ah, dearest, but that is where thou art mistaken, my little darling. Love is not blind. I am love, and I am not blind. But where art thou staying, Valentine, and how didst thou get here so soon? It was only

last Friday that we were at the charcoal-burner's hut. And what about the horse?"

"My father had him returned. I told him that the woman there had never heard my name. That comforted him a little. He says I am what they call now emancipated,—an emancipated female. Just think of his calling me emancipated!"

"Yes, and a female!" Ange exclaimed with much seriousness, as if insult could no farther go.

"He says, my father," continued Valentine, "that I am like those dreadful American women that we see sometimes in the Touraine. That he shall expect to see me, next, with an Alpenstock and a Baedeker walking up Mont Blanc. For me, I should prefer to go up in a finicula, if they ever build one," and Valentine hummed the pretty Neapolitan air of "*Finiculi finicula*." Ange listened, entranced, to the birdlike notes. Here was another accomplishment!

"Dost thou sing also, Valentine?" he exclaimed, aghast, as if to say, "What shall I do with so much perfection?" "But, dearest, Monsieur du Plessis, thy father, cannot think all those dreadful things of thee. He cannot think thee like an American!"

"Perhaps he does not really think me so bad as that," answered the girl; "he may have said it only to show his disapproval."

"But thou hast not told me, dearest, how it came that thou art so near our home."

"My father has bought a place near here," said Valentine. "We are coming here after this; all our summers are to be passed here. What a pity that we had not lived here as children together, then they would have got used to——" She broke off, blushing.

"Ah! that wretched Monsieur de Larmes has bought one also," sighed Ange. "Mon Dieu! why could not Monsieur de Larmes have suited himself somewhere else but in the Val de Chevreuse!"

At this Valentine burst into a gay laugh, which Ange tried in vain to quell. "Cease, dearest," he said, "they will hear that lovely laugh, and then I can never see thee again, they will take thee away from me. Do stop," for Valentine was still laughing.

"You look so distressed, Ange, worrying over your Monsieur de Larmes. Have you ever seen him?"

"Say 'thou,' dearest," said Ange. "Hast thou ever seen him, this Monsieur de Larmes?"

"I have seen the father of Mademoiselle de Larmes many a time. He is really a charming old man, Ange. Thou wilt come to like him very much when thou knowest him."

"But I shall detest his daughter."

"She is not so bad," said Valentine generously,—“that is, when one comes to know her.”

"I am glad to learn that thou art not staying at the house of Monsieur de Larmes."

"Be assured on that point, Ange. I am staying with no one but my dear father, Monsieur du Plessis."

"And so thou knowest Mademoiselle de Larmes, Valentine? Was there ever such a complication!"

"Yes, I know Mademoiselle de Larmes very well, very intimately, but let me tell thee, Ange, that she is not always to be admired; she has many faults which do not lie on the surface."

At this rather ungenerous statement Ange looked surprised. "And dost thou think I could love her?"

"I think so," said Valentine, turning away her head, "I think thou couldst love her very much."

"Is she handsome?"

"People say so," said Valentine, somewhat grudgingly, Ange thought. The vague idea almost took form in his mind that Valentine was ungenerous. He was a little sorry for this. And then the young man seized her hand and kissed it a thousand times, as if asking forgiveness for wronging her even in his thoughts, and vowed that, come what would, he would never, never marry Mademoiselle de Larmes.

"Do not be so sure," said Valentine, with a glance from her eye that might mean mischief, malice, unbelief, love, certainty, doubt, or all six. "Wait until thou seest Mademoiselle de Larmes and then judge. And now I must go." She drew away a few steps as if to depart, and then turned again towards Ange. "Dost thou fancy thou art the only one who has trials, my friend?" she said. "Well, then let me inform thee that thou art not. I too have my troubles. The gentleman from Sumatra arrives to-morrow at my father's place, and I am to have an interview with him then. There are two gentlemen now asking for my hand, and my father promises me several more if I do not come to a conclusion." There may have been some willing imagination on Valentine's part. Ange threw his arms in the air.

"I cannot bear it," he said, "I cannot bear it! Thou shalt not marry him, that man from Sumatra, nor any of them, thou shalt not—rather will we elope, run away together. I have a little money, dearest. Uncle Antoine will give me some also, I think. I will work, toil, slave for thee. Rather than that I shall lose thee, I will go to thy father, Monsieur du Plessis, and tell him all. I will say, 'Monsieur du Plessis, I am come to ask the hand of your daughter, Mademoiselle du Plessis. I am able to work for her, die for her, anything rather than that she shall marry a man not of her own choosing, not of her——'"

"There must be a change in our fortunes, I am sure," broke in Valentine lightly. It shocked Ange to feel that she did not seem so deeply interested as he, not so horrified at the idea of the young man

from Sumatra as he thought she should be, but he did not say so. He stood looking sadly upon the ground, and then she said:

"I have just one thing to ask of thee, my friend. I wish thee to be firm, to be decided. If I obtain a promise that thou wilt not marry Mademoiselle de Larmes without my permission, we are safe. Do not break thy word. Promise me here and now that thou wilt not let them marry thee to her unless I give my consent." These words brought joy to the young man's heart. He threw himself upon his knees and buried his face in the folds of her dress. "I promise," he said; "I promise, as the good God is my witness, I will never marry Mademoiselle de Larmes until thou, my own one, give me permission, and oh! dearest, I am in thy hands; I beg of thee, I beg of thee, never, never, never give me permission."

Valentine laughed gayly. "And now good-by," she said; "good-by until we meet again."

"And when will that be?" asked the young man.

"I cannot come to-morrow," said she. "The young man from Sumatra comes at five o'clock to take a look at me. Oh! one more thing,—promise me that thy visit to Mademoiselle de Larmes shall be paid in thy brother's dress. Perhaps that may set her against thee—I hope so." She laughed again. "There is always a hope of some sort."

"If that is all, I can easily promise," said Ange. "I shall probably return to the monastery for life after thou hast seen the young man from Sumatra." These words made Ange so wretched that he grew pale as he spoke, he trembled as if giddy, and supported himself against a tree. "Valentine, it will kill me," he added, and he looked so haggard and woebegone that the girl felt for the moment a great pity for him, but she only said, half laughing,—

"He may not care to look at me a second time."

"Don't imagine that," said Ange gloomily. Despair seized upon him. "I shall lose thee. I shall lose thee! I must exact a promise also, Valentine. Thou must give me thy word that thou wilt not marry that gentleman from Sumatra, not even give him thy hand in greeting, or I shall die."

"Perhaps I shall obtain permission when thou hast seen him," laughed Valentine mischievously. "They say he is a perfect Adonis, with lovely eyes and the profile of a saint."

Ange stood shaking his head and looking on the ground. A tear welled out from beneath his lashes and coursed down his cheek.

"Ah!" he said, "then I may as well say good-by to thee now. Valentine, I have never really loved any woman but my dear mother and thee. If I lose thee now I shall die."

The girl, much touched, came close to him and laid her hand on his. "I will not desert thee, Ange. It is all true, that which I have said,

the young man is coming to-morrow. At about the same time that you go to see Mademoiselle de Larmes he will be entering the Du Plessis mansion. But I love thee, I shall ever love thee, and I think I see a way out of our troubles." The girl was crying hysterically, now, more because of what she had made the young man suffer than because of what was she was herself suffering, and then she reached up on tip-toe and kissed him on the cheek, and was gone in a moment. "Do not follow me," she called back, and he, obedient to her slightest word, thrilled, glowing, from her kiss, sat down upon a rock near and thought long and deeply. Of one thing he was certain. They should never marry him to Mademoiselle de Larmes, even should all the powers of heaven and earth combine. He would defy them. Valentine was his only love; he would marry her or no one. He sat there throwing pebbles into the waterfall and trying to invent some way out of the fearful disaster. He picked up little pieces of wood and tossed them into the stream and watched them near the edge and rapidly slip from view, and he likened their frail tenure of life to his own experience, his own happiness, so late in coming to him, so soon to be swept away. Then he climbed slowly down the cliff and walked with lagging steps and lack-lustre eye to the stables, where he had spent many a happy day as a child. He talked with the old stablemen and grooms, petted his old pony, fed him, looked at the little foal and the week-old puppies. Then old Alan showed him a new harness that his father had sent over from England, saying that it was for his, Monsieur Ange's, own trap, which would come down from Paris in a day or two.

"Monsieur le Comte says that the Monsieur will soon be driving a young bride about these roads," said the stableman, "and he wishes everything what they call in England sheep-shape."

"I shall be driving no young bride about here, Alan, do not flatter yourself. In fact, I shall not drive at all. If I need to ride, I shall ride my old pony and nothing else," and he laid his head on the pony's neck where his mother's thin, dear hand had been used to stroke him. The day was passed in dawdling about a little, reading a little, playing on the organ, which was set up in the great hall, and in writing a letter to Uncle Antoine. He wrote:

"They say that I am to marry, dear Uncle Antoine, but I tell thee I am not. As I said to thee, my bride will be the Church, and this time I shall endeavor to learn thy wishes and obey the rules. I should prefer above all to go into a silent brotherhood, where I need never speak a word to a human soul. If it come to the worst, I will send thee a petit bleu, and thou wilt come to thy little sister's child, Maline's child, I know, as fast as trains can carry thee. From thy unhappy,

"ANGE."

A night had passed since the meeting in the wood.

"And now, my dear Ange," said his father, "thou must go back to the clothes of the world, of society. That garb which thou wearest, however romantic, does not accord with our every-day notions."

"I have nothing, father, as I told thee. All my clothes had grown so small for me that I gave them to the servants, and this dress,"—he looked fondly at the cassock, at the sleeve where Valentine's hand had rested,—*"I have been happier in this monk's robe than I ever have since my mother died."* The older man winced.

"It is not that I have forgotten thy dear mother, my son,—must I repeat it? Do not think it, but my wife makes me happy too. I sometimes wonder if one can love two women at the same time."

"Never," said Ange. "One feeling is love, the other is"—he hesitated—"the wile of the devil." His father turned away impatiently.

"Really, Ange, I think that I am a man of extraordinary patience. Be a little kinder in thy mode of speech. Thy stepmother has made me happy. But come, we will avoid all discussion in future. Before I left Paris to take thee from the monastery I ordered the tailor to send down one of his clerks with samples. He will soon have thee dressed like a man of the world. Thy mother wishes to have thee dressed in conventional style, but as for me, I care not, I think Mademoiselle de Larmes must love thee in any case. Thou art a handsome lad, Ange," and the older man sighed as he looked into the depths of those dark eyes, which recalled so clearly the gaze of the lad's mother.

"I will go to see Mademoiselle de Larmes as I am or not at all," replied Ange. "I am not certain that I shall remain here, father. My uncle will, I know, take me back if I am not happy. Did some one say that Mademoiselle de Larmes has some friends staying with her?" He still doubted that Valentine really lived at this place. He remembered her mischievous glances; he recalled her laughter; her admission that she knew Mademoiselle de Larmes. He wondered if Mademoiselle de Larmes could be the Lola who had admired the cherry-blossoms in the convent garden.

"Yes, I think thy mother—ahem—my wife, said so,—a Mademoiselle de Lussac."

"Not Mademoiselle du Plessis?" questioned Ange.

"There is no Mademoiselle du Plessis that I know of," said his father impatiently.

"Then thou knowest little enough," thought Ange in his miserable soul.

"There! I hear thy mother calling. Come! we must not keep her waiting."

As they approached the steps of the fine old country-house they saw the lad's stepmother standing upon the porch. The Victoria was at the door.

"Oh, Ange, dear child, it is thou?" said the lady fussily. "But why that dreadful monk's frock?" She ran, with a rustling, childish motion, down the steps and kissed him loudly on both cheeks.

"Why don't you change your perfumery, belle-mere?" asked Ange. "One can always trace you by that; it is dangerous."

"Come, come, Ange, no disrespect!" said his father.

His wife, who had blushed very red at the young man's rude remark, smiled in an embarrassed way. "Dost thou like violet better?" she said amiably. "I will change it for that if thou sayest it is preferable."

"It makes little difference what I like," said Ange, "but ladies do not drench themselves with perfumes."

"And where didst thou learn so much about ladies, young sir,—at the monastery?"

It was now the turn of Ange to blush, which he did, growing scarlet.

"I studied the book of nature, Madame," for was not Valentine nature's child? and then, abruptly, looking at the Victoria designed to carry only two, "Is not my father going with us to see your paragon?"

"His saddle-horse is coming round even now. Oh! but I wish, I wish that thou hadst other clothes."

"The lady must take me in these or nothing; not that anything will come of it,—at least, none of your society girls will look at a priest. No one in their senses would."

"How does he know so much of the ways of society girls?" said the lady, smiling up at her husband. Then, turning to Ange:

"Ah, there thou art mistaken. I fear it is the unattainable which always attracts, especially the feminine sex." His stepmother got into the carriage and seated herself on the side nearest the steps. "Go around to the other side, Ange, that I may sit upon your right."

"What difference does that make?" asked the novice.

"I am giving thee thy first lesson in the ways of the world. Ah! it will take a long time to undo what thou hast learned at that precious monastery."

"Try as you will," returned Ange, "there are some things that I shall never forget—no, not in a million years." He closed his eyes, drew in a long breath of the blossom-scented air, so typical of Valentine, and then, as the carriage started on, he thought, as always, of Valentine, and of his promise to her that he would never be forced to marry *Mademoiselle de Larmes*. The paper on which she had written that odious name was concealed beneath his cassock, a combination of bitter and sweet, for even if the name of that detestable *Mademoiselle de Larmes* were thereon inscribed, it had been written by the hand that he loved best in the world, and she had said, "Without my permission do not marry *Mademoiselle de Larmes*."

"Ah, dearest, that thou wilt never give," breathed Ange.

"What didst thou say?" asked his stepmother.

"Pardon, Madame, I was not speaking to you, dreaming rather of—of——" His stepmother regarded him curiously as they were swept from the public road by the fleet-footed horses, in between high stone pillars, and along a curving avenue. Not another word was spoken by the pair during the drive of ten minutes. Valentine could hear his father pounding along on his stylish English cob behind them. Once he thought of springing up and taking a flying leap from the carriage, but it seemed a silly thing to do, would make a scandal, and would look exactly as if he were not master of himself, had no strength of mind. They might tell him of her beauty, this Mademoiselle de Larmes, of her wealth, of all that a marriage with her would do for him! It was all as nothing to him. Let Mademoiselle de Larmes marry the gentleman from Sumatra, that would be a fine solution of the matter. The man from Sumatra was coming at once. While he, Ange, was having his interview with Mademoiselle de Larmes, the man from Sumatra,—oh! insupportable thought!—was to be with Valentine, was to try to make an impression upon her, and what had he, a poor young novice, to hope for after this fine stranger had appeared upon the scene?—a travelled gentleman, one who had much to tell of flood and field and hair-breadth escapes, one who had brought back with him mementoes and relics and pictures. Possibly, knowing the plans that had been made, he, being uncertain of success, had brought the girl jewels such as Indian Queens wear or bangles from Egypt. Would Valentine be able to withstand all this? The time was short. He would trust Valentine, he did trust her, but he must get a word with her. If she were staying with Mademoiselle de Larmes—but no—she had said that she was living there, with her father. Well, he must see her again in any case. He must be able to assure her that he was and ever would be hers, and hers alone. He should demand the same promise from her lips, not that half-laughing, half-undervaluing talk of Mademoiselle de Larmes, not those ambiguous and desultory remarks about his rival, the gentleman from Sumatra. She must see him again and tell him that no matter what came,—poverty, distress, separation from her father,—nothing of all these should separate her from him, the only girl that he ever had or ever could have loved.

The carriage drew up at the door. Ange got out calm and solemn. A condemned man going to the gallows could not have appeared more downcast or gloomy. He helped his stepmother to alight. The door opened as if their arrival had been eagerly looked for, and as they entered the broad, dark-panelled old hall, a pleasant-faced gentleman came out of an inner door and greeted them. His face was not entirely unfamiliar to Ange. He bent and kissed the lady's hand, and then

held out his own to her stepson, who placed a chill member within the warm and friendly grasp. The gentleman gave Ange a comprehensive and astonished glance.

"Has your son joined an order, then?" he said to the lady, half laughing, though in a surprised tone.

She drew him a little aside. "I will explain later," she whispered in his ear. "Do not let it worry you, he is not bound."

Ange, surprised at these confidences, turned away haughtily. He did not approve of whispering in public, but then Madame Bellefontaine—he never called her by his father's name—was essentially common. He had seen her whisper at the moment of the elevation of the Host, which was far worse than common. He glanced at the two as they stood together talking, probably of him. So this was Monsieur de Larmes! Ange looked at him with some degree of interest. His kindly greeting and pleasant smile had somewhat melted the young man's reserve, though he struggled against such softening of heart, which in itself, he remembered, would be a link in the chain which they were trying to forge about him. He determined therefore to remain cold as a stone to all their blandishments.

XIV.

THEN Ange saw that Monsieur de Larmes and his stepmother had separated, and the gentleman crossed the room and stood near him. His curly gray hair, pleasant brown eye, and ruddy cheeks gave him the appearance of a handsome man, and his kindly voice finished the picture to the senses.

"You have been a great traveller, I hear," said he to the young brother.

"No. On the contrary, I have not travelled much," was the youth's reply.

"He is modest, to say the least," remarked the host to Ange's stepmother, and then he said to the servant:

"Tell Mademoiselle that I shall be glad to see her in the drawing-room. Say that we have some friends for five o'clock." At these words Ange could hardly control a curl of the lip. In his straightforward honesty he had almost blurted out: "You know that she knows that we have arrived. That the victim was to be here at five o'clock precisely. And she knows that you know that she knows it, and I know you know it, and that she knows it, and that you all know that I know it, and my father knows it, and that my stepmother knows it, and that probably the servants know it. Why pretend to keep this prodigious, this horrible, this dreadful secret? Why go through this farce? Why keep up this pretence when we all know why we have come here, and we all know that everyone else in the room knows it as well. But these

words did not escape him. He stood cold and indignant, "looking," as his stepmother whispered to her host, "like a fallen angel." And then his father was ushered in, and there were more pleasant words, more low-voiced laughter, more shaking of hands. They made a charming group, all but Ange, who stood apart awkwardly, looking over some music upon the piano. And now there was a far-away rustle in an upper hall, and a more pronounced one upon the stair, which thrilled the senses of the youth, he knew not why. But, still angry at the position in which they had placed him, he said to himself:

"Ah! yes, she will have lovely clothes doubtless. Anyone who is as rich as Monsieur de Larmes can buy his daughter a charming wardrobe, but clothes do not make happiness. Oh! but to see again a certain yellow dress!" He glanced down at his worn cassock and hoped that Mademoiselle de Larmes would hate the sight of it. The step came nearer—the light frou-frou of girlish draperies, the sweep of a flounce adown the stair. He would say at the very first moment that they allowed him to speak with her alone: "Mademoiselle, I do not love you, I love Valentine du Plessis; if marry we must, all four of us, do, I beg of you, choose the gentleman from Sumatra, whose name, by the way, I am ignorant of, and leave to me my Valentine."

There was a silence. She had approached the door. She must be standing in the opening. His misery made him almost willing to break away from them all, rush out, mount his father's cob, and ride away to the ends of the earth.

"Ange!" exclaimed his father in a sharp tone. The young man started, well knowing how rude he must appear.

He turned. In the door-way stood a vision in yellow, a diaphanous, sublimated yellow,—in short, Valentine herself, a radiant laugh in her eye, a smile upon her adorable lip, the tint of the wild rose in her cheek.

"Come and speak to Mademoiselle de Larmes," said his father.

"Ah, Monsieur de Clermont, is this the gentleman who has been in Sumatra for so long?" laughed Valentine.

Ange, unable to speak, stared, his eye brightening, dilating. "Mademoiselle de Larmes?" he repeated at last in a stammering tone, "Mademoiselle de Larmes?"

Valentine, with a tender little warning look at Ange, swept across the room and took her father's hand in hers. She led him forward a little way, as if he and Ange had not met, and with a half-courtesy and a bewitching smile she said:

"Yes, Monsieur, I am Valentine de Larmes, and this"—with a dancing light in her eye—"is my stepfather, Monsieur du Plessis. I beg of you, accept my permission to——" But the end of the sentence was lost in a chorus of congratulations.

ENGLISH WIVES AND AMERICAN HOUSEKEEPING

By M. E. Leicester Addis



IN a recent *Fortnightly Review* an article on the relative cost of living in America and England from the pen of Mrs. John Lane, the American wife of a well-known English husband, has attracted considerable interest and criticism.

Her argument goes to prove that housekeeping in England (London being her centre) costs as much, is less convenient, and altogether becomes more difficult for the mistress than in Boston and New York.

I have not found it so.

Whilst able and willing to ratify several of Mrs. Lane's points, there are two sides to every question, and one's personal point of view may not generally be maintained.

To agree, and yet agree to differ, is no easy task, for embodied in my statement of experience must also be many emphatic sentiments expressed as to rent, servants, and currency by several American housekeepers who have been my guests at intervals during this notable Coronation year. The honor and experience of an international alliance have been denied me, yet, on the other hand, my credentials are above the average.

That pithy old proverb, "Never poke your neighbor's fire till you've known him seven years," was certainly first uttered by an experienced philosopher of a more primitive social order than is now our complex civilization, but its facts remain undying truths for us. For twice seven years I have paid household bills in the United States and am thereby entitled to a double poke, whereas Mrs. Lane's poke still looms ahead.

Though home again for the past two years, my Philadelphia newspaper arrives daily, so that I am kept au courant as to prices and advertisements as well as to news of the American social order.

On her side are quotations as to life in Boston and New York; on mine, experience of life in Scotland and provincial England, in London, and now in a large military centre (where food prices are higher than those of London), as well as in New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Pittsburg, Buffalo, and the Southern States, notably Florida.

In one of these cities I entered very fully into the social order from

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church and guild work and college settlement kitchens to civic clubs and societies in which the economics of prosperity and comfort in life were fully exploited and much discussed. So, at least, my point of view culminates in the perspective of a wide range.

♦

For the benefit of those who may not have read Mrs. Lane's article I shall quote from its principal points, and use such texts as pegs whereon to hang my comments, generalizations, and small philosophies.

"To start with, America has an undeserved reputation for being a very expensive place in which to live. The larger earnings are offset, it is said, by expenses out of proportion to the wages."

That phrase, "out of proportion to the wages," rather begs the question. Are we not all more or less creatures of inexorable custom, doing as our neighbors, slaves to one another's opinions? The country which produces big wages invariably also creates much spending on the part of the wage-earners, and no fact of life in America impressed me more than this—the daily shopping and spending of the crowds, the never-ceasing circulation of money—excellent, if not carried to excess. When I grumbled at the price of tomatoes here, my facetious greengrocer said, "Ah Madam! money was made round to go round," but he stared at my reply, "You should go to America to learn that properly." "Nothing succeeds like success," and I have yet to be convinced that the lesser spending creates greater prosperity.

Touching upon the question of food, I agree with Mrs. Lane that the housekeeper in America has far greater choice for the same, even for less, money, and oft have I sighed for the flesh-pots of Egypt as I contrasted sixteen cents per pound for plump chicken and turkey as against three shillings for a skeleton pullet or twelve shillings for a lean and lanky turkey. The one becomes fact in flesh, and the other is bought on faith and hope.

The Beef Trust has, for the present, settled any small difference in quotations of prices for the good cuts of meat, but I wonder if Mrs. Lane has learned that Scotch-fed meat (and London controls its supply) does not shrink in proportion as does American in the cooking, and I know she never ate a slice of cold roast beef in Boston to equal in sweetness and juiciness a slice from a well-cooked joint in London. Apart from the quality stands forth the method of cooking,—baking versus roasting,—and it may be this or the trip across the ocean that produces better results at table here, for no one need deny that we eat largely of American beef. The significant silence as to mutton recalls for me that the United States chop cannot enter the field at any price with its Southdown and Blackface brother.

We agree broadly that milk, butter, and eggs are the same, and

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that groceries average, but—here an ever-interesting, because unsolved, problem crops up—why are sugar, rice, and cheese, notably excellent American cheese, all cheaper here? So too with the best New Jersey and other brands of tinned peas, tomatoes, corn, pears, peaches, and apricots—all a halfpenny to two pence less here than in the States. Apples too are imported to sell equally cheap.

We are at head-quarters for marmalade—our breakfast fetich—and jam, now ranked as a soldier's food, beloved of children and servants, is good and cheap. I pay ten pence (twenty cents) for three pounds of greengage or plum jam in a glass jar.

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The sun never sets on the kitchen garden of America. There is no "season" there, for it is ever season, and so fruits and vegetables in richest profusion oust each other so rapidly that even the connoisseur housekeeper feels "wealth makes wit waver."

Cold storage and rapid transit are revolutionizing our markets, and as meat rises in price in the States fruits and vegetables are becoming cheaper here, for competition is the life of trade. We buy cheaply from all the world, whereas monopolies are even now grinding and grating upon American pockets and susceptibilities.

Oysters and lobsters are dearer here, but Mrs. Lane can place as substitutes on her *ménù* turbot "fit for a god," the unique sole, and finest of salmon, so that though lobster à la Newburg be granted here in limited supply, I never found it to be a cheap dish in the States. Certainly ninety cents for a small portion could not be called an expensive lunch.

One's point of view may be biassed, but the British variety of fish and game seems to excel and exceed that available in the shops of New York and Philadelphia. If terrapin and canvas-back duck be denied us, the average middle-class English palate might aptly quote, "I envy you your appetite, but not your eating."

If oyster, lobster, chicken, turkey, aristocratic asparagus, and peaches adorn only the auspicious occasions of middle-class English life,—let us be honest with each other,—we can grumble as doth thunder if more than three shillings (seventy-five cents) be demanded for a good beefsteak for two people in any London hotel or restaurant. Our experiences of beefsteak cooked, without the vulgar onion, varying from New York to Florida, were, two dollars and fifty cents (ten shillings) in New York, one dollar and fifty cents (six shillings) in Philadelphia, one dollar (four shillings two pence) in a country hotel on the outskirts of Baltimore, and seventy-five cents (three shillings) in Florida, where steak and roast divide "the beef," whether cut from neck, rump, or shin, at ten cents per pound raw.

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Distance from the centre of production governs prices in America as here, for I have paid in the "off" season in Florida thirty cents per peck for potatoes bought in New York at ten cents, and for one of the auspicious breakfasts of life, seventy-five cents for a Southdown chop in New York. It was good and well worth the money, and I might have had delicious oysters for twenty-five cents, but an American friend, whose reputation prevails from Boston to Florida and California, had planned our *ménu* as we dressed in the car en route together from the Adirondacks, saying, "When I wish to give myself a treat in New York I order an English chop," and we enjoyed it even at a temperature of ninety degrees in the shade at nine A.M.

For it is largely or altogether a question of climate; and why, therefore, reproach us for one of the manifest dispensations of Providence? Green peas on Christmas Day in Florida; green peas on Easter Day in Philadelphia; but most luscious green peas daily under the gray skies of England, from June to September, are equally grateful to palate, and "Such sweet peas!" is the praise offered at my own table by my American guests. "Nowhere out of London does one get strawberries and cream to perfection" is the oft-repeated saying of a wealthy American housekeeper who knows her world as does Baedeker.

One could "live like a lord" in Florida on five dollars per week; vegetables and fruits seemed, like Jonah's gourd, to spring up "in the night;" the cow cost nine dollars and yielded creamy milk; the rent was only ten dollars a month for a good house with the proverbial three acres for the cow; a whole chicken cost twenty cents, and a "side of mutton" weighing twelve pounds only one dollar and fifty cents. Society was charming, and it was bliss to be alive from October to April in bowers of roses, lilies, camellias, and such flowering views as once seen can never be forgotten.

Half the year! but, oh! for the other half!

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We are, without doubt, stolid, beef-eating John Bulls, too oft conservative, even to obstinacy, and unwilling to seize new opportunities, but we can offer the shelter of a summer existence to hundreds and thousands of our American cousins, and nationally we have come to regard them as a most valuable financial asset.

I recall a notable 26th of September, with the mercury over ninety degrees in the shade, as we entered the magnificent harbor of New York, and one of our fellow-passengers, a very popular American journalist, said to us, "An all-wise Providence keeps us in this weather so that we Americans may not altogether possess the earth." We had fled incontinently to the depths of our staterooms to scan the probabilities of our available wardrobes, and were even then feeling hot and hotter at the thought of the prospective greeting of Custom-House officials, who gather a revenue for the land in more or less inhospitable manner.

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Here we pay our stated rates and taxes and grumble enough thereat, but at least we know where we are. Surely Mrs. Lane must acknowledge that her American fellow-citizens neither grumble nor petition against the sixty and seventy per cent. *ad valorem* added to their cost prices?

The cost of living is not only the butcher's, the baker's, and the greengrocer's bills; if an Englishman must spend five pounds (twenty-five dollars) on a necessary holiday for health's sake, I am quite sure the American must and does spend fifty dollars or more for the same benefit, for mountain and sea-side resorts are not cheap from May to September in the States.

A little farther afield, but still not astray from the subject, comes the question of doctors' bills for treatment of malaria and typhoid fever, so sadly familiar to American households, the coëxistent shade to that sunshine so productive of glorious fruits and vegetables, gifts of a seemingly beneficent climate. When melons of forty, even sixty, pounds are piled high in the markets and luscious peaches are only twenty-five cents for a big basket, many a Rachel is weeping for her children, for the mortality of children from choleraic affections is appalling during their second summer of life.

In Baltimore, only two years ago, we tried to fall asleep in a temperature of ninety degrees. We rose unrefreshed to find the mercury at eighty-seven degrees, and for a whole fortnight mercury and humidity competed from ninety-five to ninety-nine degrees daily. During the first week over three hundred children died, heat prostration and sunstroke affected hundreds of adults, and in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, and all the great Western cities there was a gruesome similarity of experience.

Mrs. Lane suffers from our cold houses and soft and expensive coal. Certainly, as an offset to the American summer climate, I admit that my experience here is "nine months of winter and three of very cold weather," and as Providence has denied us anthracite, we do our best to keep house and body clean from smuts and smoke.

We never "turned the heat on" in America, for there are minor defects even in furnace heat,—the coal-gas which kills one's ferns and palms and flowers, the "clicking" of steam in pipes, and excessive temperature or none at all, and though I object most strongly to even the appearance of criticism of a country in which I have received such kindness, still, in reply, I quote a facetious English friend who while in the States often had to travel by night in a Pullman "sleeper," and whose adieu was, "Au revoir! I'm off to-night in the Incubator!"

Next comes in order that greatest of international housekeeping problems—servants,—their ways, methods, manners, results in work.

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The colored population still form a great serving-class for the States, and I much preferred them to untrained Irish maids, who had to be regarded as "glass with care." A good English servant is unexcelled; she knows her business and attends to it, and expects her neighbor to do likewise. When she respects her mistress and realizes that she is just as experienced as she is kind, then she graciously acquiesces in her vagaries,—permits her to soil her fingers, mount stepladders, or even mix a pudding, but as vagaries she regards them; and why blame her for a point of view expressed again in primitive proverb, "Why keep a dog and then do the barking?"

Mrs. Lane is made to feel loss of dignity when as mistress she joins in household tasks. My experience of life has been—in Florida, "Real quality does nothing;" from the Irish maid, "I won't have no medlin'"; and even our faithful Scotch servants, so full of an admirable, sturdy independence, speak of a "real lady that does naething." A successful mistress exacts much and grants much and a good servant reciprocates. Like the Queen of Spain, the English mistress has no legs. Mrs. Lane's friend may advise the locking up of groceries, but the mistress who does so acquires a reputation "of sorts," and every cook worth keeping should be trusted with her cupboard key. Much of my knowledge of cooking and quantities was acquired in America, and when I engaged the cook I wisely stipulated that she must be willing to accept any of my American recipes, and she has certainly stuck to her bargain.

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In dealing with Mrs. Lane's complaint as to excessive rents and wages, one cannot really judge without particulars of house and family. Certainly one hundred and fifty pounds (roughly, seven hundred and fifty dollars) is very little for Kensington. I know of one large house in a less fashionable quarter—rent one hundred and seventy-five pounds (about eight hundred and seventy-five dollars)—where there are four public rooms, five bed-rooms with dressing-rooms, two nurseries, servants' rooms, long stairs, large halls, etc. There are four children and frequent company. The cook receives twenty-four pounds (one hundred and twenty dollars) per year; nurse, twenty-two pounds (one hundred and ten dollars); house table-maid, twenty pounds (one hundred dollars); and "between" maid to help them all, twelve pounds (sixty dollars); and no one appears to be overworked. A cook at twenty-four pounds may excel her predecessor at thirty-five pounds, the wage quoted by Mrs. Lane; there is absolutely no standard in London. As to bread-baking, I believe there are hundreds of English cooks who will bake bread if engaged to do so; but I would courteously represent that such is not now commonly done in American cities. My

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American guests have been very emphatic on that point, and personally I cannot recall that any friend there had bread baked at home. In America we all bought baker's bread, save in Florida, where there was no baker.

"Fifty pounds (two hundred and fifty dollars) a year for washing disgracefully done" does sound harsh. In London the washing is never done at home, the soot, the fog, the hard, chalky water, forbid any successful result, so why fight against the unconquerable? Many landlords forbid "washing hung out." Many a poor woman here makes an honest living by family washing, and the general prices ruling in the country villages around London cannot be called extravagant. I shall particularize a few, just to show that if Mrs. Lane pays one pound (five dollars) a week for dirty washing, she exceeds the necessity of the case. Here one pays the equivalent of forty cents per dozen for sheets, bolster-slips, etc.; thirty cents per dozen for serviettes and small articles; underclothing in the same ratio; tablecloths from four cents; coverlets from twelve cents; and each maid's washing of underclothing, one starched dress and six aprons, at thirty cents per head. These prices in themselves would be too low, but the contract is based upon the whole wash. Kitchen towels and flannels are very generally washed at home. When in London, we sent our washing to Hendon, and we thought it both clean and fresh when returned.

Even with the quoted third more than the rental for rates and taxes (and that is exceptional), where in New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore could Mrs. Lane get a good house requiring three servants to keep it for one thousand dollars in a district corresponding to Kensington? Fifth Avenue and Madison Avenue do not offer any attraction at that price; Chestnut, Walnut, and Spruce Streets do not; neither does North Charles Street. My own English friends in New York had to go far away to Brooklyn to find a commodious flat at thirty dollars per month, the sum mentioned by Mrs. Lane. One of our American friends pays two thousand dollars a year for her nine-room flat near Central Park, and two of these rooms have borrowed light.

One of our London dailies (a very well-known American writer is on its permanent staff) published a leader on Mrs. Lane's article, and then their New York correspondent replied to it in detail. A few extracts from his reply express my own sentiments and experience perfectly:

"Courtesy, of course, does not allow me to dispute the assertion that it is possible in the neighborhood of Central Park to rent a commodious flat, containing nine rooms, entirely finished in oak, and sup-

plied with nickel-plated plumbing, a kitchen range of the best pattern, and speaking-tubes, and to enjoy possession of this earthly paradise as a monthly tenant for thirty dollars. But I speak from experience, and experience of a most painful kind, when I assure you that, though I have searched far and wide for an apartment of the kind described, I have failed to find one."

Then in detail he quotes eighty dollars to one hundred and fifty dollars near the upper part of the Park, rather lower rents between West and East Fifty-ninth and Ninety-fifth Streets; in Lexington and Park Avenues (corresponding to our Notting Hill district) from seven hundred dollars to two thousand dollars a year.

Again he asserts: "As to servants: General servants grow rarer and rarer here in the States, and as they decrease in numbers their exactions become more merciless. Greenhorns ignorant of cooking ask a minimum of twelve dollars a month. After a year's experience they demand fifteen dollars to eighteen dollars. Plain cooks are paid from twenty dollars to thirty dollars. Washing, to be sure, is largely done by the servants. But only in tenement-houses is it usual to bake bread at home."

I fully realize how much life is simplified for the worker in America, whether as mistress or maid, and were I to build a house here, I should combine the solidity and convenient closets of Scotch houses with the attractive and artistic fittings of American homes, for I gladly endorse every word of praise as to beautiful woodwork. Alas! marble is not one of our building stones, and in bathrooms tiles must take its place.

As to packing, we too had untoward experiences, and we found how cheap sea-freight comparatively is. We paid only half as much from Philadelphia to London, as from the latter port to our present location, but thirty-five miles distant. We were obliged to give reluctant tips again and again in the American storage warehouse. The majestic negro porter accepts twenty-five cents very complacently where our waiters are satisfied with sixpence, and for carters' men the genuine *pour boire* of threepence.

I find myself opposed to Mrs. Lane's argument on our "expensive" currency. Our penny is certainly two cents, but it nearly always buys as much as the American nickel. In Florida the nickel was the lowest coin in use, and only at the post-office could one use single cents. Take car-fares, for instance; a nickel is the cheapest fare, whereas we have halfpenny, penny, and twopenny rides, and even four pence is only eight cents.

As to furniture, I regret, with Mrs. Lane, exceedingly that I did

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not buy freely in certain lines, notably bedroom suites, Morris chairs, china closets (cabinets), bedroom chiffonniers, and writing-desks, but not upholstered or the finer drawing-room and dining-room furniture. The magnificent wood-supply of the States is productive of cheap results. A Morris chair in oak may cost five dollars, but its cushions in a presentable cover will cost six dollars or more. Then too the wardrobe is expensive in America, whilst here it takes the place of a bedstead in a suite, and as moths thrive and flourish in our damp climate, we find wardrobes more desirable than hanging-closets. For seventeen pounds (eighty-five dollars) I bought a well-finished and polished solid walnut suite of two chairs, wardrobe, washstand and bureau, dressing-table, bevelled mirror in wardrobe door, fine tiles on washstand, and fittings in brass and gun metal, and I doubt if I could have bought the same quality under seventy dollars in America. When one adds cost of transport and takes all risks there cannot be heavy profit for any importer.

It interests and surprises me to read, "My soul loathed the sticky paste and varnish" of English art furniture, because in response to my desire to be fair and to acquire knowledge I asked a wholesale upholsterer for his views, whose response was: "Our demand for American furniture has fallen off greatly because where we polish they varnish, and in our damp climate the varnish becomes dim, and then we receive complaints."

◆

My chief grumble against London is, that it is a wilderness of distances, and though cab-fares are cheap, their sum-total becomes a heavy item. Yet I have repeatedly paid four dollars and fifty cents for a hack in New York to convey me and my belongings from steamer to necessary train, a distance not so great as fifty cents' worth in London.

Although I dare not fully agree with Mrs. Lane, I can widely proclaim that all the granite-ware utensils in my kitchen (not crockery, which is very cheap in England) and many conveniences for cooking were specially chosen in America; and that our bath-towels, pillow-and bolster-slips, and sheets, also bought new in the States, have the commendation of my laundress because "they dry so quickly and are easily handled." I would also buy there all my cotton goods, as cheaper in style and quality, also blouses, and all sorts of cotton or silk clothing where fit, cut, and style are of value. I should also choose to bargain there for variety and style in silver-ware and glass, although I could not claim that they cost less. I even sent to America for a box of Christmas presents last year, and though the carriage cost me two dollars and fifty cents I felt fully compensated in the pleasure expressed as to beauty and novelty.

It is impossible for any one person to lay down the law as to averages, but our experience is that we spent about the same sum in America for ourselves alone as we now do in England when keeping house with two servants.

America gave me a life of wide individual horizon, of larger income, of greater expenditure and temptation to spend; England is the land of home and heart interests, of smaller incomes, and of lesser incentive to spend. Who can say which is the better?

The democracy of America leads a luxurious as well as a hard-working life when compared with our English middle-classes, who still appear to be cheerfully content with little.

It was from a Bostonian's lips that I first heard Carlyle's phrase, "Divine discontent," and ever since I have puzzled much and often as to when it should begin, where it should end, and whether its result is advantage or disadvantage.



A FELLOWSHIP

BY EDWIN L. SABIN

WHEN on resistless, hurrying feet
From Northland realms come snow and sleet,
Three loyal friends are my desire:

A book, an apple, and a fire.

A book—whose pages bear me far
Where pleasant climes and peoples are,—
O'er oceans broad, and deserts vast,
But leave me safely home at last.

An apple—'neath whose surface round
Dear orchard memories abound,
Whose fragrance tells of Junetide days,
Whose tang recalls October ways.

A fire—whose embers are my sun
When skies without are low and dun,
Whose brave heart laughs at whirling snows,
And midst their threats but brighter glows.

A volume, where fair visions throng;
A pippin, filled with wine and song;
A hearth, to front the Storm King's ire:
A book, an apple, and a fire.

THE MAN WITH THE SHOULDERS

By *Albert Payson Terhune*

Author of "Dr. Dale," "Syria from the Saddle," etc.

"DON'T move! Don't look around! Keep on poking the dirt with your cane in that idiotic fashion. Pretend you don't know I'm here. My husband is looking straight at us."

Now I defy any man, be his life ever so blameless, to hear a speech like this, unmoved, unstartled.

For lack of anything better to do, I continued to scratch letters, words, and figures in the moist earth with the ferrule of my black-thorn.

"That's right," approved the voice; "you look, if anything, lazier and more purposeless than ever. Keep it up while I talk to you. A single turn of your head, a movement of your lips, may betray us. You don't know what he is when his jealousy is waked up."

I could imagine a shudder with the words.

"He might shoot," she went on. "You told me, yourself, he always goes armed."

Now, here was a nice situation for a comparatively harmless cotton-broker to find himself in!

My work at the office finished, I had decided to run down to Midland Beach for the sake of the sail, and for a swim and a little supper afterwards on the cool veranda of Stevens's.

The excursion-boat Favorite was due at her Battery dock, but was not yet in sight among the heat haze that pulsed between the Long Island shore and Staten Island. So I had found a seat on one of the Battery Park benches, among the heterogeneous rabble that fly thither on a summer afternoon for a breath of sea-air, and was patiently awaiting the arrival of the boat.

Then and there had come the voice rousing me from my drowsy occupation of writing on the earth with my cane-tip.

"Oh, I was foolish—*foolish* to come!" she went on. "But—you see for yourself—I couldn't help it. How was I to know he'd be here?"

How, indeed? I sat, elbows on knees, straw hat tilted down over my eyes, apparently still absorbed in my terrestrial writing.

"With your hat like that and your head all hunched forward, he may not see your face," she was saying. "I hardly knew you myself, except by the shoulders. No one could mistake those shoulders."

There was a note of admiration in her voice that led me instinctively to square my shoulders and make them appear as massive as possible.

"Don't! Don't!" she gasped, "he'll notice if you wriggle like that! I wish I could see your face, to find out if you are afraid. You've always boasted you'd dare anything for me. I wonder how you are daring this."

The situation was trying. Here was a woman with a wondrous sweet voice talking familiarly with me. Yet I could not turn to look at her.

Here—somewhere—was a man who "always goes armed," and whose one hope in life, apparently, was to take pot-shots at me or at the owner of the voice. I seemed to feel the pistol-muzzle pointing at various tracts of my anatomy. It was not a nice sensation. Besides, the meagre shade was shifting from where I sat; the bay reflected the fierce sun-rays; and I wanted to wipe my forehead. But I was forbidden to move.

"Poor boy!" went on the Voice.

"But——" I began in desperation.

"Hush! For goodness' sake hush!" panted the Voice. "There!" it went on triumphantly, "I knew you were frightened. Your voice proves it. It isn't a bit the way you usually speak."

An idea occurred to me.

Laboriously I traced in the sand with my cane,—

"It is all a silly mistake."

"You coward!" hissed the Voice, "you bring all this on me, and then speak of the affair I thought so beautiful as 'a silly mistake.' If it is a mistake, whose fault is it?"

"Yours," I scrawled.

"That is what men have been saying from the days of Adam," she retorted. "When danger comes, shift all the blame on the woman! Oh, you pitiful coward!"

"You don't understand," I wrote.

"I don't want to! All I know is that you asked me to meet you here, to sail to Midland Beach with you, and to come back by moonlight. I came,—like the foolish girl I was,—and the very first person I see in the crowd is my husband. I turn to you for help, and you tell me 'it's all a silly mistake.' Oh!" she broke off abruptly in a scared tone.

"What?" I scribbled.

"He sees us!"

Again the imaginary pistol-muzzle seemed levelled at every inch of my perspiring self.

"He sees us and he recognizes me," she went on. "Sit still! Don't move, for the love of heaven!"

I confess I felt a keen desire to crawl under the green-painted seat.

"He sees us," she whispered again. "He knows everything. I can tell by his face. He can see my profile, and he guesses who you are by those shoulders of yours. There is not another pair like them in New York."

I cursed the vanity which had led me to keep in heavy training ever since I was right guard on the 'Varsity football team, and which had given my shoulders the breadth and squareness of a steam-radiator. And this same vanity revenged itself by piquing me with the knowledge that there was evidently at least one other New Yorker with just such shoulders.

"If you are afraid, make a dash for it and get out of his range," she went on, a faint strain of contempt tingeing her tone; "I will stay alone to bear the consequences of my 'silly mistake.'"

Now, I admit that the disinclination to make a show of myself by careering wildly across Battery Park had as much to do with my remaining seated as had any ideas of chivalry towards a woman I had never seen.

"Perhaps I was wrong," she murmured contritely. "Perhaps you aren't afraid, after all. Perhaps you'll help me."

"What do you want me to do?" I wrote.

"Sit still! I have a plan. First, I must get rid of the bag, and then——"

"What bag?"

"Why, the lunch, of course. Don't you remember I suggested putting up a little lunch we could eat on the sands in the moonlight? It's such a jolly lunch," she went on regretfully,—"*paté de foie gras* and salted almonds and biscuits and lettuce-and-cream-cheese sandwiches in brown bread, and a pint of Barsac, and—and the kind of macaroons you like. I put it in a hand-bag. He mustn't see it."

"No," I scrawled miserably.

"It's on the bench beside me. I'm going to drop it at your feet as if by accident, and then get up and walk away as though I'd just been sitting here alone for a few moments' rest. Wait till I've been gone a minute or two, and then pick up the bag and stroll along the river wall towards the Aquarium and lose yourself in the crowd. He can't track us both, and whichever one he does follow can swear to utter ignorance that the other was here. But if he sees me with the bag—— Oh, you *must* take it. You *will*, won't you?"

"What shall I do with it?" I traced.

"Oh, express it back to me! Ready? I'm going to drop it."

I made one despairing effort at sanity.

"Who do you think I am?" I wrote.

"Why, Gabriel Hardin!" she whispered reproachfully. "Are you crazy? What sort of a question to ask *me*! Oh! Look out!"

Now, this reproving enunciation of my own name finished my mental collapse.

Moreover, the low cry of alarm that ended her speech seemed to indicate the approach of the Man behind the Gun.

It was time to end a farce of which I could make neither head nor tail.

I started to turn for an explanation. But as I did so the soft thud of a fall at my feet attracted me. There, on the ground beside me, lay a silver-mounted satchel, a monogrammed silver tag still swinging from the impact.

I looked up from the bag, to the general direction whence the Voice had come.

All about me, on the tangle of benches, sat perspiring New Yorkers. Here were the jaded down-town business man, the Italian junk-dealer and his greasy wife, the sallow type-writer girl, the heavy-jawed water-front tough,—a kaleidoscope of nations, whose only points in common were boredom, heat, and weariness. The sweltering city had cast out its denizens into this one tiny clearing, where all are equal and where Father Neptune breathes ozone into the deflated lungs of merchant and mendicant alike. A messenger-boy drowsed on the seat to my left. On a bench in front of me sat two deaf-mute lovers making goo-goo fingers at each other. These meagre details were all I could grasp in that first look at my myriad neighbors.

One or two vacant seats gaped like broken teeth amid the throngs that filled the benches near me. From any one of these vacancies might the owner of the Voice have just departed. Hers might be any of the weather-drawn faces that moved past me in the swarm of pedestrians.

In any case, she was gone, and I alone was left to smuggle the bag away and to dodge the jealous man with the revolver.

The Favorite was at last swinging around to her dock.

Why let this adventure spoil my trip? Why not follow out my original plan of going to Midland Beach? It was a garish little place and would divert me.

Why not—growing bolder with each thought—carry the hand-bag down to the Beach, eat its very promising contents, and keep the bag as a memento?

I picked up the heavy satchel and joined the crowd that lazily surged towards the boat.

I had taken perhaps ten steps when an arm was linked in mine and I was drawn aside into one of the backwaters of that human current.

Then the man who had led me there dropped my arm and stood facing me.

He was a big man. From his face and dress, both of which suggested some dull, rough-chiselled metal, I formed an ill opinion of the Voice's taste in the choice of life-partners.

"You're the husband, I suppose," I remarked as coolly as the weather and my banging heart would permit.

"Hey?" he queried uncertainly.

"I said," I went on with more assurance, "I suppose you're the husband,—the jealous one, you know. The one that sees us and recognizes my shoulders and always goes armed. And, by the way," I added, again squaring those luckless shoulders, "let me say right here that if you make any strenuous gestures towards your hip-pocket, you'll go down and out before you get that famous revolver of yours into commission."

"Come, young feller," he broke in, "I don't know what that song-and-dance about husbands and revolvers means, but you'd better come quietly with me. Give me that bag."

"Oh, you *are* the husband, then, after all? Well, let me tell you, I don't even know your wife by sight." I paused, feeling I was somehow scoring a failure as a diplomat. I was not used to the role, and my experience with jealous husbands was confined to literature. So I began again on a new tack.

"This bag is mine," I said. "I'm taking it to Midland Beach."

"You'll be taking it to Police Head-Quarters," he corrected with unnecessary firmness. As he spoke, he pulled aside his coat lapel, displaying a Central Office Detective badge.

"If she'd told me you belonged to the force," I observed, less beligerently, "I'd never have touched the measly bag. Take it if you like, and distribute the salted almonds and—and the macaroons that are supposed to be the kind I like and the Barsac and things among your fellow-detectives."

"I'll take you too, I guess," he decided, after looking at me a moment in a puzzled sort of way.

And he did.

Three hours later, in Chief Conroy's private office, at Police Head-Quarters, the tangled skeins began to straighten. My partner, hastily summoned from his Long Island home, the president of the Aaron Burr National Bank, even the pastor of the Twelfth Unitarian Church,

had in turn arrived at the Central Office to be cross-examined as to my identity and respectability.

At last the Chief was satisfied, and I was graciously permitted to depart.

But, now that the mysterious peril, whatever it was, was past, my curiosity as well as my self-assurance reasserted itself; and I demanded, as a free-born taxpayer, a full explanation of what I now termed my outrageous arrest.

"Let's begin with the bag," I suggested. "What is there in a handful of salted almonds and a lettuce-and-cream-cheese sandwich to inflame the cupidity of the New York Police Department?"

The luckless satchel had been deposited with the "property clerk" and placed in the safe.

The Chief good-naturedly sent for it and prepared to turn out its contents on the table.

"Look out!" I warned, "you'll smash the Barsac bottle."

Out fell, with a succession of muffled clinks, a half-dozen chamois bags. Surely an odd way of putting up a lunch!

The Chief looked keenly at me when the disgorgement began, but at my evident amazement his face cleared.

Opening one of the bags, he tenderly drew out a half circlet of diamonds that gave back the electric light in showers and rainbows of radiance.

"Salted almonds!" I groaned. "Barsac! lettuce! sand——"

"Did you chance to read of the Boyd jewel robbery in this morning's papers?" he queried. "We got hold of a member of the gang at noon to-day. He told us they were going to carry the jewels to Savannah. They had chartered a little tramp steamer that was to anchor in the upper bay this afternoon and send a boat ashore to the Battery for the person entrusted with the plunder. No one but the man who had engineered the whole affair knew who was to be sent south with it, nor where the jewels had been taken after the robbery. But the fellow we caught knew they were to be in a satchel he described to us. So I had fifty plain-clothes men in Battery Park all afternoon with orders to keep an eye on anyone carrying such a bag and to arrest him as soon as he made for any of the landings:

"Mulrooney here and two other men saw a woman—she's the wife of the leader of the gang—come into the Park and sit down. Her photo is upstairs," waving his hand towards the Rogues' Gallery; "she had the bag and seemed to be scanning the harbor for her boat. She is the woman who served two terms at Auburn,—first for forgery, then for shoplifting,—and she must have recognized our men as old acquaintances.

"So she saw the game was up and decided to lose the jewels and

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save herself. When she passed the bag to you and you started for the landing, Mulrooney nabbed you. She got away safe in the crowd,—worse luck!”

“But,” I protested, “you’re mistaken somewhere. She knew my name and—and she knew my shoulders.”

“I don’t know anything about the shoulders, Mr. Hardin,” broke in Mulrooney, “but she couldn’t have helped knowing the name if she knew how to read. You’d scribbled it in the earth with the ferrule of your cane about a dozen times before she sat down beside you.”

“I don’t know how you people feel,” I remarked, getting to my feet and for the third time that day squaring my luckless shoulders aggressively, “but *I’m* enormously glad a woman with a brain like that got away free. It was worth my missing the Midland Beach trip.”



FROM FAR AND LONELY BIVOUACS OF THE NIGHT

BY ANTONY E. ANDERSON

FROM far and lonely bivouacs of the night
There fell the challenge that the crickets cry;
And now the expectant maples stir and sigh,
Green hills assemble, and behold! the light
Spreads out a sheaf of arrows keen and bright,
And flings his banners to the gladdening sky;
White conqueror is he: before him fly
Grim myrmidons of darkness and affright!

White conqueror is he: his arrows stirred,
Yet did not wound, the heart of yonder rose;
They wove enchantment round the mocking-bird,
Till all the air grew vibrant as a lyre;
They touched a soul that slept, and lo! it glows
With love, with duty, and divine desire!

THE RESURRECTION OF EDITH

By Edgar Fawcett

Author of "An Ambitious Woman," "Tinkling Cymbals," etc., etc.



THE wedding, at St. George's Church, in Hanover Square, had been very pretty. There had been eight bridesmaids, all charming girls, and a great crush afterwards at Mrs. Brocklehurst's house in Tilney Street.

The day was one of those marvellous things that early June can do in London, not by any means without a cloud in the sky, but with immense droves of them, downy and drowsy, such as one sees in Constable's pictures, and a south wind that made lutes and lyres of all the lavish foliage in park or square.

Mrs. Brocklehurst was the bride's sister, almost ten years older than Edith, and she had insisted on lending Stairs to the newly wedded couple. Stairs was a fine place in Kent, full of quiet splendor and alert servants, with great, stretching wooded lawns, noble terraces, and flowerful pleasancess—the ideal abode for a honeymoon.

Edith's had been called a very brilliant match. An orphan since childhood, she was one of the old Surrey Pendletons, and poor, like all the later generations of this race. On the other hand, she was wonderfully handsome. People stared at her when she took her walks abroad, and at her first Drawing-Room, only a season ago, she had been raved over. Still, when Ivor Delamayne fell in love with her and asked her to marry him, even her ambitious sister, Mrs. Brocklehurst, was satisfied.

"Ivor," she said to her husband soon after the engagement, "is almost an ideal match for Edith. Young, handsome, high-bred, clever, and enormously rich—what more could possibly be desired?"

Charlie Brocklehurst, of whom it had been said that he took few things in life seriously except a good horse and a good smoke, now gave his expensive cigarette a musing glance.

"Some people would want a title, I suppose."

"A title. Bah!" dissented his wife. "I begin to think titles, nowadays, almost vulgar. What good, pray, would one do *us*? My father and Edith's was the twenty-first baron of his line. Yours was

the seventeenth baronet of his, though you happened to be a younger son. Ivor Delamayne's big fortune was left him by his aunt, who was a duchess. As if it mattered! Half the smartest folk in town haven't got titles. And would I, for instance, *know* the Countess of Stringingly? Hasn't Lady Frothingwell struggled to get herself inside my doors for two or three years past? Hasn't the Prince been amiability itself to dear Ivor, and isn't he persona grata with all the other Royalties in marked degree? No; don't tell me that Edith could be marrying better, for really, Charles, I won't have it!"

The couple just wedded, that merry June afternoon, must certainly have felt one title their essential belonging—that of lavish and vital happiness.

Ivor looked at Edith, when all the bustle and clatter of *départure* had ended and they were seated opposite each other in a compartment of the Kentward-speeding train, secured for their special solitude à deux, with a mixture of passion and relief.

He leaned forward and fondled one of her slim hands in its dove-gray glove. "Oh Edith, I'm so awfully fond of you! Upon my word, I don't think you quite grasp how much!"

"If I hadn't, I shouldn't have known how to say 'yes,'" replied Edith, demure yet abnormally rosy, "for 'yes' would have stuck in my throat."

"Brides shouldn't quote Shakespeare," smiled Ivor. "As a rule, he's too serious."

"Whom then should they quote?" vaguely faltered Edith.

"Their bridegrooms—with all the splendid nonsense those bewitched chaps are prone to express. Nothing else. Bother old William! Hasn't he said that the course of true love never did run smooth? We're living contradictions. You came, I saw, you conquered. There wasn't a ripple of discord from the first. Confess there wasn't!"

His head stayed stooped over her hand while Edith murmured:

"There *was* a ripple, you know, Ivor. But never mind."

He dropped her hand. "What on earth do you mean?"

"Your second-cousin, Lady Elizabeth Pomfret. You *did* like her once. And two weeks after our engagement—at Mrs. Annesley's dance in Eaton Square—you flirted with her. Oh, I saw you!"

"Bess Pomfret?" laughed Ivor. "Oho, oho! We played as children together. I've made love to Bess a hundred times——"

"Ivor!"

"If you *call* it love! And what, pray, were *you* doing, that evening at Eaton Square, but making eyes at Captain Trefusis, who had, as I'm certain, offered himself to you once a week ever since you came out?"

His face radiated mirth as he rose, intending to reseat himself at Edith's side and tease her into fresh little bouts of serio-comic accusa-

tion. For an instant, standing thus, he saw through one window the splendid ribbon of sky and landscape flash on—a zigzag of white hawthorn-hedge, a pool where two red cows drank, a huge oak arabesqued with sinuous boughs against violet air. Then the awful rocking came, and the crash, and the mad jerks, and the madder screams, and the dulness of vision, and the struggle against it, and the wild last thought of *her*, with swift night to end all.

Ivor had not been severely hurt. His particular carriage had tumbled over a bank of no great height, and had not suffered the frightful jammings and splinterings of others, twenty or more of whose inmates had been crushed to death. His ill was cerebral concussion, and yet so slight that he recovered from it in three or four minutes. Then followed the agony of seeing Edith flung upon the floor of the compartment, lying there quite still, with her face against the floor, and her head oddly twisted sideways.

He raised her in his arms and laid her upon one of the slanted seats. She looked deathly white and her eyes were shut. He believed her dead, and for an instant thought of something in his pocket sharp enough to sever a big vein if it could not reach as deep as the heart pounding against his side. But soon this frenzy passed, and help came amid the frightful clamors both inside the wreck and round it.

At length he got her away—through such passages of horror!—to a house and a room and a bed. Somebody (he believed afterwards that it was a very fat old woman with a scarlet face, who smelt of gin) told him she was certainly alive, only in the deadest of faints. He wanted to fling both arms about his informant and kiss her; he remembered that perfectly, and afterwards felt very confused on the subject of whether he had really done so or not.

He got Edith to Stairs before evening, though it was still many miles away. Later a sense of selfish guilt assailed him; he had used money with such cruel prodigality, as it subsequently seemed, when so much anguish was all about him! But it was too late then to repent this pitiless egotism. The easy-rolling vehicle and the fleet horses had done their work, and as twilight was fading over the peaceful lawns of Stairs, every tenderest aid was being lavished on his bride.

Repeatedly she had opened her eyes, but no word had left her lips. After a second or two she would lower again the large, white lids that he so loved. Lying now in the great, dark-tapestried bed, she seemed as if death might any instant spirit her away. Her condition was one of stupor. She did not appear to know that Ivor spoke her name, and she did not once move a limb, a hand, even a finger.

Two physicians, quickly summoned from a near town, proved efficient men. But Ivor soon saw that the case puzzled them. Hours

had to elapse, of course, before two other London physicians arrived. They, as it shortly became evident, were puzzled as well. By this the stupor had partly left Edith. She spoke an occasional word; she also moved the fingers of her right hand, though very feebly.

In a day or two more Stairs was harboring eight or ten visitors. Mrs. Brocklehurst (brave one minute, swallowing tears the next, and the next in tremors of anxiety) had hurried to her sister's bedside. A little later came Charlie, her husband, tugging his long, blond mustaches and looking so serious that one of the old servants who had known him since a baby almost asked him, "What name, sir?" on the threshold of his ancestral home. Others followed, relations of both Edith and Ivor. The last to come was Lady Elizabeth Pomfret.

"Perhaps you don't expect *me*," said Lady Bess, when she met Ivor, "but I've dropped down, all the same."

Ivor pressed her hand. "It's very sweet of you," was all he could manage. And her pure, slender face, with its patrician chisellings, brought back, in keenest retrospect, Edith's light little burst of mock jealousy just before a certain dire event.

Edith's face brightened when she saw Lady Bess. They had always been good friends, and when the betrothal to Ivor was made known she had said laughingly to his kinswoman, "There, now, I caught him and you didn't!" It was a daring speech, but merry, and by no means malicious. The two girls looked at each other. Lady Bess crimsoned and bit her lips. Then she burst into a laugh. Afterwards, for some reason, they were firmer friends than ever.

Stairs was such an immense house and so amply supplied with every species of facile service that a great throng could be quartered there and yet bring no hint of bustle to disturb its majestic repose. But in this case there was no great throng, and as for half the people who had gathered beneath its roof, Edith really was not aware that they had come at all.

Gradually these departed, and still she knew it not. Then others went, and at last only Mr. and Mrs. Brocklehurst remained, with Lady Bess (who often flitted in and out of the sick-room) and her mild, amiable, yet somewhat inanimate mother, the Countess of Esk. Everybody returned to town with a flickering conception that poor Edith was conditionally "better," but all felt the word to be dipped, as it were, in tinctures of solemn doubt. And so good tidings could not be borne up to town, and at this or that festal meeting the word "better" grew slowly into "doomed."

June, at Stairs, glided into July, and still there was no perceptible change. One of the famous London doctors came down regularly three times a week. Edith seldom spoke, and never more than a sentence at a time. She seemed contented; no suspicion of complaint

escaped her. She delighted Ivor by murmuring, more than once, "I do so want to get well," and "I think I shall pull through, dear boy," and "I mean to be very brave," and (still more heartening than all) "I don't suffer, remember; I don't suffer in the least."

He would often sit beside her for an hour at a time, devouring her face with a regard which she seldom saw, for nearly always her eyes were closed. He felt that fate had used a bludgeon upon him, and in secret he ground his teeth and clenched his hands. There lay this beautiful creature, whose frailty and peril seemed to jeer at all her past health and safety, at all his own present defeat, disappointment, and pain. "Oh, the irony of it!" he would think. "She is so near me, yet so remote from me! I dare not even clasp her in my arms for fear of killing her—and only a little chain of yesterdays ago the very breezes, as we might have told ourselves, were blowing us to the haven of our honeymoon!"

"Charlie," said Mrs. Brocklehurst one day to her husband, "I won't have you here any longer. You go about the house with nothing on earth to do, and it's quite absurd that you should stay on at Stairs. There's no—immediate—danger, Sir James has said so (Sir James was the London doctor now in attendance), and you always loathed the country, dear, when there was nothing to shoot, and the Ascot races will soon be on, and you pull your mustache so that I think it's really getting smaller at the ends. You're bored to death; so go back to Tilney Street and your beloved Travellers' Club, and promise to write to me every day."

"Ought I, Cynthia?" said Mr. Brocklehurst wistfully. "Wouldn't it be—er—"

"Bad form?" struck in Lady Bess, who had just sauntered into the room. "Not at all, Charlie. By all means, go. You can't be of the slightest use here, as Cynthia says. We'll wire you if there's the faintest change."

So Charlie went; but there was no occasion whatever for wiring. In another week Lady Esk went too. And so Edith's husband, her sister, and Lady Bess (whom Mrs. Brocklehurst, by the way, had once deeply wished Ivor to marry) remained together at Stairs.

"Do you know, Bess," said the mistress of the house after Lady Esk had gone, "I think it quite angelic for you to behave like this?"

"Nonsense, Cynthia!"

"You're doing it just for me!" protested Mrs. Brocklehurst, in a semitone charged with tears.

"I'm doing it for Edith too," said Lady Bess, a shadowy tinge of reproach in the answer. "And for Ivor as well," she added, looking full at her relative, and yet with a shyness and sadness curiously blent. Then, breaking off in abrupt, practical fashion, she proceeded: "You

were speaking for some time this morning, I observed, with Sir James. Pray tell me what he thinks about Edith now?"

"Oh, he was terribly explicit."

"Terribly? How?"

"In a literal sense the poor girl's neck is almost broken—and yet she lives. It's the rarest of cases, but he quoted to me certain precedents. One of the vertebræ of the neck is dislocated, and there is a lesion besides—delicate, of course, like some slight injury to clock-work. She is able to speak, and to move a very little, as we know. Hence there is not sufficient pressure on the spinal cord to cause immediate death, only enough to induce paralysis and degeneration. In the end, however,"—Mrs. Brocklehurst drooped her head,—"death must certainly come."

So she said and so she meant, and summer drowsed into autumn and autumn died into winter, and once more spring returned, until at last it was a year since Ivor Delamayne had married Edith, and still the sick girl lingered on and on. She spoke, now and then, of dying; she was wholly resigned; and yet not a word of self-commiseration left her lips. She loved to have Ivor hold what she called her "well hand," and then, if she addressed him at all, it was often to say how she feared her long illness must weary him and how she disliked the thought of his being kept at Stairs by its continuance. When he or Lady Bess told her that they had been driving, riding, or walking together her face would always brighten. "You must go out oftener—oftener together," she would say; and once, while saying it, she dropped into a gentle doze. There was something in the utter trustfulness expressed by this passive disclosure that pierced Ivor's conscience. He vaguely saw his cousin, who stood at his side, turn away. Did she too feel the same furtive thrill? For Ivor and Lady Bess had always liked each other, and there had been intervals in their lives when the joining of their fates partook of imminence rather than even probability. During the last year they had somehow found that the secret of their never having quite understood each other was a mutual distrust of each other's powers of sympathy. In the great pity which both felt for Edith both had found a kind of magic mirror. They saw themselves here as never before. And pardoningly of Ivor, it should be remembered that he was young, and that an ideally heroic constancy to the pale and wasted creature whom he still treasured with every outward sign of devotion could not, in the nature of his very youth and hardihood, persist through indefinite months. Moreover, he was simply unable to go on grieving as he had formerly done. The sunshine would push itself into his life, and though this fact may wear a tinge of tragedy in its recital, it is nevertheless one on which all human thrift and progress is based.

And so, during the second year of Edith's extraordinary prostration, there came certain times when Ivor almost confessed to Lady Bess that without her his existence at Stairs would have been the harshest torture. His observer became greatly troubled. She thought seriously of leaving the house, and even mentioned to Mrs. Brocklehurst the chance of her mother soon desiring that she should take such a step. But promptly Mrs. Brocklehurst grew almost hysterical.

"Oh Bess, I've always believed your mother such a self-contained person! She once told me that solitude had no terrors for her—that she often preferred it. *You going!* Oh Bess, what *shall* I do? What will poor Edith do? Your very step on the floor seems to give her comfort! And as for Ivor—why, how *can* he live on here with no society but mine? Charlie, you know, has got into the habit of spending only one week here out of every month, and Charlie is such a distracting person when he is bored. And he always is bored if you don't give him his head. Going? What a bouleversement! I—I don't think I can ever stand it." Here Mrs. Brocklehurst, palpitating and woe-begone, seized both her young kinswoman's hands—"I realize that it's grossly selfish, and all that. But oh, do have pity! And it may not be so very much longer, you know—not so very much!"

Lady Bess staid on. She did more; she let Ivor speak, now and then, in dreamy sort of anticipation concerning the future. He never even hinted that there was the dimmest possibility of their sharing it together,—and yet at certain moments the very air which these two young people breathed seemed pregnant and tremulous with suggestion.

One evening at the beginning of the second spring, just after Lady Bess had returned from an absence of less than two days in town, she found Edith oddly restless—if "restless," applied to a frame that was almost totally paralyzed, be the proper term.

"For the first time since my illness," she told her friend, "I have felt a *desire to move*."

Lady Bess tried to hide with a smile her altering color. To this gentle martyr was some new curse of physical anguish coming? But Edith quickly reassured her.

"Oh, I've no *painful* desire," she went on. "It isn't like that. Ivor and I talked it over this afternoon. I ventured to prophesy that it might mean some turn for the better."

"Why not, Edith?" As Lady Bess gave this reply the satire of her own words wrought a self-wounding recoil. This body beside her!—what was it but a spectre with big, dark, burning eyes? Could all shadowland hold a shape more phantasmal?"

"It—may—mean a turn for the worse, Bess. And if it does, I should hate——"

"Well, Edith, you should hate——"

"To have him ever marry again."

"Ah—yes—I see."

"Of course, Bess, you and he were once—well, you understand. But all that is past now. I don't mean that you ever really cared for him enough. You could have had him, beyond a doubt, if you'd wished. What I said to you just before I was hurt—you remember?—was only in joke."

"Yes, Edith, I never thought it otherwise."

"But now, Bess, I want you to promise me something. Will you?"

"Anything, dear, anything."

"Not 'anything,' only this: Please try your best to keep him from marrying after I—you know what I mean. If I *should* die, Bess, I wish him always to treasure me in memory just as he treasures me now in life. It's wrong for me to ask this of him; I feel it—I feel it! But if he *should* love anyone else as I'm certain he loves me now, oh Bess, I think (though this is only wild fancy—what else?) that I should rise from my very grave!"

"You're excited, Edith." Poor Bess was fearfully excited herself, but she spoke with calm.

"Yes. But you'll promise—you'll promise, all the same?"

"I'll promise, dear, to do everything, everything—in my power!"

Edith's eyes closed soon after this, and for many succeeding days she lay in such a languor that repeatedly the one nurse (an elderly and most capable woman) came hurrying to Mrs. Brocklehurst, Lady Bess, or Ivor with the frightened intelligence that she believed her patient dying.

Meanwhile Lady Bess had kept her promise a profound secret, as also the interview which had brought it forth. Ivor could scarcely hide his pleasure at her return, and Mrs. Brocklehurst openly showed hers.

"I always dread your going," she said. "It makes that poor brother of mine so forlorn. And doesn't poor Edith strike you as more spectral than ever?"

Lady Bess gave a second nod. It soon occurred that the nurse, Noreen, complained of being left alone at night with her charge. "Mrs. Delamayne," she explained, "has fits of delirium between midnight and morning. At least, they appear so to me. For example, she will be quite wakeful from twelve, one, or two o'clock, sheer on till dawn. And during such time she will say the strangest things. I cannot understand half of them; the sentences are often very broken, and much that she utters has to do with her past—with what I should imagine was her early childhood. But last night she greatly alarmed me. She suddenly broke out, 'Noreen, I feel that I can rise and walk, if you'll only help me.' I assured her that this was very doubtful, and begged her to make no such attempt. But she insisted that I was

wrong, and pleaded with me to lift her in bed. After a while she became quieter, and finally slept. But I would not—I really dare not,” ended Noreen, wiping her eyes and addressing Mrs. Brocklehurst, Ivor, and Lady Bess in tones of equal plaintiveness, “pass another night alone with the poor, dear lady, though I’ve got to love her more than words can tell!”

“You shall not,” said Lady Bess decisively. “How easy!” she added, turning to Mrs. Brocklehurst. “There is that huge lounge in the room just adjoining.” Then she turned to Ivor. “We three will take turns lying there. To-night will be my turn, Noreen, and as you’re a light sleeper, and as you look very tired, I shall give you a narcotic at ten. It will doubtless affect you most pleasantly, and you’ll sleep on until morning. Of course, if anything very strange should happen, I’ll rouse you. For myself, I’ve always been a perfect cat about sleeping. The least sound wakes me. But then I doze off again in half a second.”

A little after ten that evening Noreen was sleeping soundly in her small cot-bed close to Edith’s. And Edith seemed very placid as Lady Bess passed into the next room, separated from the invalid’s by an open but heavily curtained door.

Ivor, who had entered from the outer hall, startled her. He stood near the yellow and leaping fire-blaze, and this, commingled with the lamplight, gave him a ghostly look.

“Why on earth——” began Lady Bess.

“Oh, don’t ask me. I sha’n’t sleep for hours yet. Won’t you sit down and talk with me for a short while?”

When they were seated side by side in front of the fire, Lady Bess looked at him with a hard, dreary stare. Then she narrated, in harder and drearier voice, her recent converse with Edith.

“You promised that!” burst at last from Ivor. His face was all pallor and arraignment. “How could you, Bess? How could you?”

“Why should I not?” she asked with constraint, yet challenge.

“You know why! Because I love you—because in the after time I want you for my own!”

“Ivor!”

“No—no! I must speak on!” He did more than merely speak. The next instant, while she veered in her chair, he leaned towards her and half roughly caught her to his breast.

“It must be, Bess! It’s written! There’s no escaping it. You must break that promise when all’s over. I’ll wait years, if you please. And yet——”

But now the girl had struggled to her feet. She seemed gasping for breath. Directly in front of them both was the tapestried doorway of Edith’s room.

"Look, Ivor—look!"

A wraith, a vision, with face whiter than its white gear, had parted the curtains. It stood there for a few seconds.

"Ivor!—Bess!"

They both heard the two names. Each name was bell-like for clearness, yet somehow not loud, and yet somehow packed with measureless reproach.

Then the phantom tottered and fell. Ivor sprang forward and raised his wife's fallen shape. But before he had borne it back to bed all sign of life in it had gone.

For a year afterwards, for longer than a year, people kept asking one another if Lady Bess Pomfret would not marry the man whose wife she had so devotedly nursed. Mrs. Brocklehurst found herself incessantly assailed with questions like these. But she could never give them the least hint of a satisfactory answer. And at length, in a sort of mournful desperation, she exclaimed to one questioner:

"Good Heaven, Mrs. Cornwallis, how shall I reply? They go everywhere in London, just as they used to do. They meet and shake hands. They are precisely the same to everybody as they were before poor Edith became Ivor's wife. They were friends then, and they are friends now. For my part, I don't see what folk are prattling about. In Heaven's name, why not leave them alone? What have they done to be chattered of? I shouldn't feel surprised, as far as *I'm* concerned, if neither were to marry at all."

Neither did.



FROM A BOOK-LOVER

BY RICHARD KIRK

WHEN they cut the stone,
Where I lie alone,

Let them grave this line:
These best friends were mine,

Song and Tale and Jest.
Matters, then, the rest?

Dawn and dusk may know
How I lov'd them so!

A BULL MOUNTAIN PASTORAL

By H. Giovannoli



NEW HAVEN was laboring under the most intense excitement. Clayte Rowsey, the local desperado,—in those days every Kentucky county had a desperado,—had been grossly insulted after his last visit, when he indulged in some playful pistol practice and cut up a few other innocent shines, and now threatened to return and seek revenge. Not only was his wrath directed towards the people of New Haven generally, but to an extraordinary degree was he angry at the conduct of the editor of the *New Haven Eagle*, who had been so bold as to criticise him.

Rowsey, it is true, might have done much worse and still have kept within the limits of what he considered highly proper. He simply rode his horse to the river's brink, within hailing distance of passing craft, and when the *Hornet*, a fussy little steamer which plied the Cumberland, got close enough he levelled his Winchester at the pilot and ordered him to bring the boat to a halt. The pilot knew Rowsey and halted. Rowsey then ordered him to land. There was some delay in obeying this last command, but the click of the machinery of Rowsey's Winchester quickly accelerated the *Hornet's* movements. The gang-plank was swung ashore and Rowsey rode aboard. Retaining his seat on his horse, the master of the situation drew a flask from his hip-pocket, invited all assembled to take a drink with him, made a few jocular remarks to the Captain, and then permitted the *Hornet* to proceed in peace. This pleasure ended, Mr. Rowsey, as was his wont, galloped through town some five or six times yelling like a drunken Comanche, keeping up a running fire with his sidearms at the doors and windows along both sides of New Haven's one street, and finally faded away in the distance towards his habitat on Bull Mountain.

When the *New Haven Eagle* arraigned Rowsey at the bar of public opinion and openly and vigorously denounced his ill behavior the people of New Haven and its vicinity trembled for the safety of the editor; but how could the *Eagle* maintain its standing and its platform if it permitted any visiting desperado to outrage the peace and dignity of the community and not at once call the offender to account? The *Eagle* had "the largest circulation in Pulaski County of any paper published in the world," stood for "undefiled Democracy,"

and was the "untrammelled champion of the people's rights." Once every week the *Eagle* circulated among the people of New Haven and the surrounding country, although, strictly speaking, the *Eagle* was not of New Haven a part. Gates Adams, who was editor, publisher, typesetter, and circulation manager, printed the *Eagle* at his chicken-farm some three miles up the river from New Haven, where he also indulged his hobby—the breeding of a very superior race of fighting game roosters which were famous in all the mains from New Orleans to St. Paul. Every Tuesday morning Adams would drop down to New Haven, either by skiff or horseback, gather all the local news and gossip, and return to his chicken-farm, not to reappear at the settlement until he returned the following Thursday morning with a sackful of the latest edition of the *Eagle*.

Adams was a man of peculiarities, physically and mentally. For one thing, he could hear but could not talk, and his replies to questions or any remarks he made were jotted upon a pad in a manner jerky and epigrammatic. Adams's past was a mystery. He "dropped in" on New Haven one summer day, prospected awhile, bought a valley farm up the river, and shortly afterwards started the *Eagle*. Adams published his newspaper just as he ran his chicken-farm—quietly, methodically, and without parade. He was strictly matter of fact. Until the day that Rowsey came to town the *Eagle* had been devoid of news or comment of a sensational nature.

Major Helm gave Adams a full account of the Rowsey episode, but cautioned him against printing it, not only for his own good but for the community's sake. Major Helm was familiar to the readers of the *Eagle* as "Publius," "Pro Bono Publico," "Taxpayer," etc., enjoyed the privilege of reading the exchanges while they were still in the post-office at Bole's store, and in other ways contributed to the prosperity and standing of the paper.

"The *Eagle* is a newspaper," Adams scribbled upon his pad for Major Helm's perusal, drawing a heavy black line under the first syllable of the last word, and stepped into the skiff which had brought down a shipment of game chickens and was to carry a return cargo composed of three days' accumulation of exchanges and a sack of government garden-seed sent under the frank of Congressman Tinsley.

The agitation of the people of New Haven at the mere thought of the *Eagle* exploiting Rowsey's visit assumed the proportions of a panic when the paper actually appeared. The general opinion was that Adams had surely invited disaster and death. The *Eagle* devoted a couple of columns to an account of Rowsey's visit, for that issue displacing a black-bordered pill advertisement from its guaranteed position of "first page entirely surrounded by reading-matter on all four sides" in order to give due prominence to the only real live local story in the *Eagle's* history. And the *Eagle* did not stop at merely narrating

the day's doings. It referred to Rowsey, in black head-letter, as a "blot upon the decency of the county, a man utterly devoid of respectability,—in truth, a drunken scoundrel and withal a scalawag entirely without genuine courage, a bulldozer, and a braggart."

This issue of the *Eagle* appeared as usual, and Adams was not seen in New Haven until the following Tuesday.

"Seen anything of Rowsey?" Major Helm asked him with the air of a man breaking bad news.

"No. Been here again?" scribbled Adams.

"No, he hasn't been back, but he's coming," the Major observed slowly, watching the effects of the information. There was a pause. Adams quietly wrote:

"Finest rooster I had died this morning."

"We heard from Rowsey yesterday," continued the Major. "He is terribly sore over the article in the *Eagle* and swears he'll kill you on sight. Thought I'd tell you, you know, so's you could be on the lookout. Rowsey's a dangerous character. They say he's killed two men, and you see how he carried on here."

"Much obliged. Know anything to-day?"

The Major didn't know anything in the news line, but handed Adams a communication from "Conservative" touching a matter of widespread interest then engaging the serious attention of Congress.

New Haven did not have long to wait for the next move in the drama. The following day saw Clate Rowsey in town "loaded to the guards with corn whiskey and as mad as a wet hen," as Major Helm afterwards described him. Rowsey boldly announced the object of his visit. It was to square accounts with Adams, and he didn't purpose to use any firearms on the "little editor;" he'd just "wring his neck and spill his printing-office into the river."

Rowsey expected to find Adams in town that afternoon and waited for him until nearly dusk, when he grew impatient and started for the chicken-farm. The editor's friends were greatly alarmed, but none was courageous enough to go to his assistance or even to attempt to warn him of his danger. Some of them did sit up a little later than customary to see if any news came as to his fate at the hands of the reckless Rowsey, but no news came. Early the next morning, however, quite a number of the citizens, Major Helm in the party, concluded to drive out and see how matters were progressing with the *Eagle*. When they reached the gate of the chicken-farm they found posted there a placard which contained this inscription:

"Persons desiring to see about chickens, pay subscriptions, or contract for job printing, wait until I return. Gone to Somerset after the coroner.

"GATES ADAMS."

JUDITH IN MACKFORD'S ENTRY

By Grace Rhys



I.

JUDITH was walking home through the Gartra Meadows, a market-basket of yellow daffodils upon her arm.

It was the last day of March, and the air, though brisk beneath the golden sunset, was fairly mild. The yellow flowers that spread the ground on either side of her path were touched by low beams from the west, till each one seemed a winged creature, born of the spring sunshine and ready for flight.

Judith paused in the middle of the meadow, and setting down her basket at her feet, stood to look about her. The check shawl had fallen back from her head, and there was still light enough abroad to illuminate her pale, smoothly cut face and the coiled bronze of her hair.

Her unconscious attitude was a strange one for so young a girl,—her head thrown up, with her nostrils wide arched, and both hands clutching the bosom of her old drab gown.

Although she neither spoke nor wept, all her face and figure expressed the physical anguish of heart-break. The spirit-flowers about her lifted their heads to the light evening wind that came up southwards from the sea. Judith watched as she stood the fluttering movement that passed in waves hither and thither over the field, then, stooping to her basket, she looked sadly at their motionless plucked sisters lying there.

"I wish to me heart I'd never pulled them," she said aloud. "Sure, what is there now for the creatures but a strange death there beyond?"

Then she started over the field once more, crossed a stile, then through a wood and over a stone wall, and a bit down a rutty road to her grandfather's cabin.

He was sitting in his usual place by the fire, a little, weazened, old man, with a broken-spouted teapot held firmly between his knees.

"Ye're a long while comin'," he said to her. "Put them trash outside for the night and get the tay."

Judith threw off her shawl and went obediently about her tasks.

When her back was turned the old man hid the teapot in a hole in the wall.

"Judith," said he as he mumbled his bread, "what does Miss McCraw want for the body?"

"Five shillings," answered Judith.

"Holy Powers!" said the old man, rocking himself, "where'll I get all that to lend ye? But ye'll not disremember to pay me back, honey, and the ten shillin's a week as well?"

"No, grandada," said Judith absently.

Presently he set about dragging a greatly tattered letter from his breeches pocket, together with a pair of spectacles.

"Thirty shillin's a week at the flower sellin'," said he. "Saints above, it's a fortune. It was wonderful kind of yer old aunt's niece to think of ye, Judith," he went on, peering down at the scrawled paper by the light of the turf fire.

" 'MACKFORD'S ENTRY,
' Soho,
' London.'

That'll be a grand place. Parks and palaces, no less; and the Lord Mayor and Queen Victoria ridin' in gold coach all to their selves. Them's the kind of things ye'll be seein' of a mornin'! And them that has thirty shillin's a week can live very fine. It's a lady ye'll be in no time, Judith. But you won't forget the ten shillin's a week for yer grandada, or maybe fifteen, will ye now, agra?"

"Fifteen, if ye like, grandada," said the girl, lifting her brooding head. "But what at all will ye do by yourself when I'm gone? I'd rather go to me grave than be goin' among strangers as I am."

"Whisht with yer talkin'," said he. "Don't I tell ye it's a lady ye'll be? Get up out of that at wanst and go feed the little pig."

At nine o'clock the old man climbed up to his sleeping-loft, heaped with his queer old man's treasures, and Judith was free to go to her little room, where she had slept every night for twenty innocent years. It was carefully neat; the patchwork-quilted bed was poor and clean; the earthen floor was fresh swept; at the foot of the wooden bed stood a table spread with crochet work on which was placed Judith's mass-book and three small white plaster images of Christ, the Virgin, and St. Joseph. Beside the image of the Virgin was a little cup of late snowdrops.

Judith stood before the table with clasped, quivering hands. Her whole nature, wild, reserved, and shy, was protesting against this sudden uprooting forced upon her by an old man's covetousness. No blossoming plant torn up violently by the roots could have felt a more

surprising pang than she, as she stood there, her bosom heaving, her long, supple fingers wreathing in and out.

She did not want to be a lady, or to stand behind a counter in a shop in a grand street, like Miss Pandy who sold calico and groceries in Trasna town. Wood and field, morning and night, the changing winds, and her liberty, and her long prayers in the quiet, that was all she wanted. The faces of strangers had always been a terror to her.

It was late when at last, worn out by the passion of the day, she lay down on her bed, to sleep for the last time in the deep stillness of her native place. A merciful dream visited her as she slept. She had journeyed, she thought, to the fields of Heaven, where throngs of yellow-clad angels stood round about, who bowed this way and that as she passed, like daffodils in the wind.

II.

It was a gusty April evening when Judith stood uncertainly at the corner of Moor Street, Soho. Straws and dust and paper turned in the wind at her feet. The dingy crowd hurried ceaselessly past her. Not a soul stopped or gave her good-night. Pale to her and brazen the faces seemed. No look of mercy nor any kindness could she discover in all that procession of impudent eyes. Her modesty was affronted with derisive looks. Her head spun with the racket of her bewildered journey on foot across the town. The high, dark houses that everywhere shut out the sky threatened to fall upon her.

With wandering eyes she began to move slowly down the street, her shawl pulled over her head according to her country habit, her red bundle upon one arm, her basket of flowers upon the other.

A gang of shouting, ragged children darted after her from a side street, their hungry eyes following her basket of flowers. A boy ran alongside her, and "Give us a flower, Miss," he said. Judith stood still in the street to look at his dirty, clever face, and the hurried passers thrust her this side and that as they went by.

"And if I do give you a flower itself, will you bring me to Mackford's Entry?" she said. He nodded and held out his hand, and Judith gave him his hand full. "There's a good child," she said, and the boy snatched the flowers and darted on before. Unaccustomed to streets, Judith had much ado to follow.

The boy's companions dived through the crowd and ran round and round her; and "Miss, Miss, Miss," they shouted, "give us a flower."

"Have manners, now," was all Judith could say as she pushed desperately on, and soon a whole troop was careering with her. The boldest child snatched a flower and ran shrieking away; then one dirty little hand after another filched the daffodils from her basket; all along the way their treble voices cried out in delight as they divided

the flowers among themselves; their bright eyes turned angelic over the country gold that scattered in a stream down the dingy street.

When at last Judith stood in Mackford's Entry, her basket was empty, and the children had all run away.

Panting with weariness and fear, she gazed about her. Refuse lay about the narrow, paved court. On either side the sombre houses towered about her, hiding the sky.

But there was still some courage of hope left in her heart. She turned and entered the dark doorway and slowly began to mount the stairs. It was almost dark in the house, and her unaccustomed feet stumbled and slipped on the dirty steps. From above she heard cries and voices whose tones were new to her: never had she heard the like.

At the top of the first flight she halted, and stood waiting at the nearest door, not daring to knock. A hag with a face like a mask suddenly opened, looked her up and down, then spat at her feet and shut the door again.

A man passed her on the stairs, and she found breath to ask him for Mrs. Dowdall.

"The lidy in the hattic?" he said with a grin. "Up at the top. Ye can't miss them. They're making noise enough."

Judith climbed on and on. Her head was giddy, her free hand clutched the broken rail, her feet caught in the broken steps.

She stood at last at a door at the top. Loud noises were inside. She knocked softly again and again, and at last it was suddenly opened. The air within, like a solid wall of impurity, stayed her at the threshold. But a strong arm pulled her in, and a loud laugh greeted her, and a voice that had some echo of her home in it spoke in her ear:

"So here ye are at last with the shawl and the bundle. Arrah, how did ye leave the pig at home? Laws, it's twenty years or more since I laid eyes on such a walkin' country innocent. Come in till we look at ye. I declare ye'd do anybody's heart good."

Inside, the room was long and low and seemed full of people. A fire burned in a little grate and two oil lamps were hooked on the wall. Beds and heaps of dark-colored bedding lay in the corners. The walls were black, the ceiling was black, the floor was black. Judith gazed round upon the faces, despair settling down upon her. Villanous eyes answered to hers. She was come into one of the foulest of London's myriad foul dens.

She was turning faint and giddy when an oldish man came near to her and pulled the shawl from her head.

"It's a bloomin' buttercup," he said drunkenly, and threw an arm about her.

Judith turned and struck him savagely, so that he reeled.

The loud laughter suddenly ceased. "Not much of the buttercup

Judith in Mackford's Entry

about that one!" said a monstrous carter who sat by the fire. "It's a bloody wild hawk. Turn her out, I say."

Judith backed against the wall; and from that moment her agony began.

Against the wall she stood, her head bare, her wide-open eyes turned upon the black ceiling, her white face staring, lost. She knew herself in mortal plight.

Rough kindness did not move her. Laughter, abuse, and buffetings had no effect. Invisible chains seemed to pin her upright in her place.

Night drew down and still she stood there. Noxious insects ran upon walls and ceiling and dropped upon her hair. Noxious human creatures made the night a loud, evil dream. The air became more stifling in its foulness, but she still held herself erect against the wall.

Morning came, and the day and night again; and do what they could, she would neither eat nor drink, nor could they pull her from her place.

What of evil the girl heard or saw during those long hours cannot be known. The angel of innocence surely laid his hand upon her eyeballs that she might not see, and upon the doors of her ears that she might not hear.

Like one possessed who strove with phantoms, she still stared upward, her lips sometimes moving as she said her "Our Father which art in heaven."

For two days and two nights she stood there, without food or drink, crazed with fear, like some wild creature new taken, but all the while her heart was imploring help from heaven. And "Mother of Mercy," her lips would say, "our life, our sweetness, and our hope, it is on thee we cry, poor, banished children of Eve. It is to thee we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this place of tears."

During the second night her strength began to give way and she came down twice or thrice to her knees, but always sprang up again rigid in that attitude by which instinct assured her safety. Her mind began to wander. On the afternoon of the third day she saw the Virgin in a white robe standing in the door and beckoning to her with a smile. With a sudden movement she snatched her shawl and fled with great swiftness from the room, down the long stairs, and out into the street.

In a moment every trace of her was gone from Mackford's Entry. She was swallowed up in the hosts of the city, as a ripple is overridden by the following tide.

III.

THE dawn wind was rocking the flowers of the Gartra Meadows as a gaunt figure crept and stumbled along the path. Sweet odors mounted and were spread upon the air. A lark, disturbed by the uncertain footsteps, fled up with rapture into the half-lit sky.

Judith paused upon the spot where she had stood still five weeks before. Here nothing had passed but the soft change of leaf and blossom. Only upon herself had change been sore. She was haggard, ragged, with bleeding feet.

Like a dog she had been hunted, like a dog she was creeping home.

Standing there, she clasped her hands and lifted her eyes to the arch of heaven that was slowly filling with the rays of the new day.

Tears streamed down her hollow cheeks as she gave her thanks. Her face was ghastly in its pallor, but its spirit was unbroken, its purity unstained.

Painfully she crept down the path; under the increasing light, primroses shone at the bank's foot. Trembling she stooped and took a few into her hand, and, kissing them, "God bless the face of Ireland," she said.

Then, still weeping, she went with difficulty on her way.

When the old man opened the door that morning, Judith was sitting there against the house-wall. Her head had fallen back in her sleep and her lips were so blue in the sunlight and her features so pinched and white, that the old man made sure that she was not dead.

He was softened by the sight, and when he had fetched the nearest neighbors, Judith was by them tended and with kindness put into her own bed.

She lay for long enough, and her pillow was often wet with tears; for she was come to the last of her strength, and her wild heart was wounded almost to death.

In time she recovered through the peace and quiet of the place, and was at last able to take up her old life with thankfulness again.

She never would tell what she had seen, nor how without money she had crossed the sea and travelled the country's breadth. "Sure, I was harished; but there was a miracle in it," was all she would say, or, "I went out of me senses, but there was a Protection over me."



AT NIGHT

BY FULLERTON L. WALDO

MY soul hath been, throughout this difficult day,
A thing God crumples ere He throws away.

This large, lit, tremulous calm is, I suppose,
That God may reconsider ere He throws.

THE RESURRECTION OF "P. I. G."

By *W. A. Fraser*

Author of "Mooswa," "The Outcasts," "The Eye of the God," etc.



PERCY I. GREENING was a "Police Walla." This was not exactly a punishable crime—it simply meant that he officered a small force of native military police in India.

But he was married. In his case this was a crime. There was no necessity for it; besides, he was totally unfitted by nature for making the sweet little woman he got as wife happy.

What the intermediate stages had been I don't know, but when I knew him he was a Superintendent of Police at Kokbang in Burma. English-speaking people give Kokbang another name, but I, who had the name from the natives, say it is Kokbang.

His initials, as you will see, were "P. I. G." Believers in fore-ordination might have thought there was much in this, for when somebody at the "Club" asked where "Pig" was, meaning Greening, it was approved of, and accepted as a name calculated in every way to suit the Superintendent of Police.

And, as if something else were needed to establish his perfect right to the title, he was accustomed to speak of his father at home as a "perfect independent gentleman."

Of course, he had not always been a Superintendent; he had climbed, rung after rung, in the ladder of promotion, from the very bottom.

Many of the fellows thought that he had got on fairly well simply because his wife was so very sweet and patient that everybody felt they must do something for her.

It was just in this that the bristles showed. Greening thought that he had not progressed fast enough,—as fast as his extraordinary ability warranted,—and he put it down to the fact that he was handicapped by the modest, retiring little wife. But he did not call it modesty; in his vocabulary, which was painfully rough, it was "stupidity." Men were being shoved over his head every day, he complained,—men with fewer years of service and much less ability.

That would not have mattered,—his growling at slow promotion,

because everybody in India used that as a groundwork for much conversation,—but what did matter to the other fellows was, that he should blame his bright wife for the whole thing.

"Other men are pushed on by their wives," he assured her; "they make friends with the officials, and through the good feeling that ensues the husbands are advanced."

Then when she tried to help him by being pleasant to some crusty old Commissioner, he got jealous, and acted quite in accordance with the name they had bestowed upon him at the Club.

Everything in India is known—everything. It is not astral mail, it's servants; so all these things were known at the Club; also at the "Mess," for there was a Madras regiment stationed at Kokbang.

So when the "Mess" said that "Pig" ought to be horsewhipped, or scalded and scraped, or indulged in some other fanciful form of torture, the Club concurred, and hoped the "Mess" fellows would carry it out.

The thing couldn't go on forever, for the more the station saw of the little woman, the better they liked her, and the more they thought something ought to happen to "Pig."

Then one day the climax arrived. It came with a rather swagger official, who swooped down on Kokbang to stir the minor officers up a bit.

It was like making an "At Home" for Satan, having the old chap at the house, for the swashing monsoons had tossed the steamer about on the up trip from Rangoon, and his liver seemed to have got spiked on one of his short ribs.

But little Mrs. Greening went bravely to work, and soothed and cajoled the irascible official, and saved her husband a good wiggling; for his men had let a bad-mannered dacoit slip through their hands and get clean away.

But Greening got jealous, or pretended to; and there was a row and a separation. It was all his doing—he had been working for this.

The little woman was all right when he had been an underling; now, if he hoped to get very high in the Service, he felt that she was hardly class enough—had not enough social influence.

This was really what was working on him in an indefinite sort of way. But the definite, the tangible, was that he had practically separated himself from her, giving her an allowance to live on. In this he felt that he had been magnanimous.

She crept like a broken-winged bird to the Johnstons, cousins of hers, who had told her to come to them if anything should happen. The anything had happened, and there she was.

That night at the "Mess" there was a council of war. Little electric sparks snapped from off the gray hairs of the Colonel's mustache

as he spoke of "Pig's" latest. "We've got to bring that animal to book," he said. "How shall we do it?"

According to Delaney, there was only one method; that was to thrash him till he saw the error of his ways. He, Delaney, would be the Executive Committee if they decided upon that course.

"That won't do," said the Colonel sadly as he thought of the relief it would give them all to see the thing done; "he'd have it in for the little woman afterwards. Besides, she'd feel the licking as much as he would—we've got to think of her."

Other plans were discussed, legal and otherwise, for reforming "Pig," but none of them seemed quite right. It always came back to the same thing: they had to think of the little woman; they had to regenerate *him* without hurting *her*.

Then Major Grant received a direct inspiration. "We must make him crazy to get the 'Little Woman' back again," he said. "We must make him appreciate her; and to do that, one of you fellows has got to—got to—make the running, do you see?"

"All right, Major," said one of the others, "it's your plan; go ahead."

"No, no," answered Grant; "this is a vendetta, and we'll draw lots who's to break in this swine."

It was glorious, this idea. It was sport, and revenge, and all the rest of it put together.

When the little strips of paper were drawn out of the helmet a very strange thing had happened: Captain Leydon had been selected as the agent.

Now Leydon was a man who fled from petticoats. He had a "V. C.," but where women were concerned he was a downright, arrant coward.

When he realized what had happened beads of perspiration stood out on his forehead. A subaltern encouraged him, for he knew his weakness. "She's as gentle as a kitten," he said.

"Yes," said the Major, half fiercely, "and as good as an angel. You go ahead, Leydon, and we'll make that bully sit up."

It made Leydon's head ache, this new honor. It made him drink, it made him do all sorts of things; but there was no getting out of it—he knew that and didn't try.

The Captain had had one or two nasty experiences in his time. In a general mix-up in the Swat Valley, a sort of *melée* in which he got tangled up with half a dozen evil-smelling Afridis while trying to pull a slip of a soldier from among them, one camel-limbed tribesman had driven a two-pound knife with a vengeful, upward thrust over his ribs and half way through his shoulder; and another time he had got frightfully mauled by some mutinous Sepoys.

But as he looked back on these incidents and thought of what he had to undertake on the morrow, they appeared to him by comparison as pleasant little episodes in his generally monotonous soldier life.

The Major had had more experience, so he took the Captain in hand to coach him. "There's no parade to-morrow," he said, "so you might drop in on the Johnstons unofficially, as it were, when you're out for your morning gallop. The 'Little Woman' will think you've called to see the two girls, and you'll be able to break the ice without flushing your bird. See?"

As Leydon neared the Johnston bungalow next morning there was much white muslin on the veranda. His courage slipped out at his finger-ends; it made his riding-reins slippery; that was the perspiration of despair.

Without knowing what he did, he dug a spur into his horse's flank and galloped by as though he were the bearer of important despatches. It was only putting off the evil day, he knew; but it was a sort of start, this riding close up to the ladies.

That evening after polo the Major simply thrust him on to the Johnston girls—made them drag him off home for some tea. The "Little Woman" had not been down at the polo; she was fretting at home over "Pig's" treatment.

That did break the ice; it did not seem so very difficult, after all. The Captain was bashful and quiet. The "Little Woman," sweet at all times, saw this, and tried to make him feel at ease by drawing much of the girls' talk towards herself, giving him a chance to pull his anatomy together—especially his hands.

After that he came on mighty fast, the fellows at the Mess thought.

The Johnston girls were in a heaven of delight. The only difficulty was, which one was it? For it did not seem to make any difference to the Captain which of the sisters was on hand when he called or drove with them. He was as attentive to one as the other, and when they were both there he was quite impartial.

If neither one happened to be presentable when Captain Leydon dropped around at the bungalow, which he had got into the habit of doing at all sorts of hours, he was quite content to put in the time with the "Little Woman." That he really remained longer when Mrs. Greening was entertaining him she put down to a desire on his part to see the girls—but which one was it?

Kate thought it very remarkable for Captain Leydon to suddenly commence devoting so much attention to them, for many a carefully planned onslaught had been made upon his heart by judicious mothers, for he was in every way a desirable conquest. There was a big estate at home that he seemed to bother his head very little about; and he was a fine, handsome soldier.

Of course, it had been a sudden fancy,—but which one? Kate was certainly the handsomer, but Maud was just the sort of girl to take a soldier's eye—full of go and life and class.

They besought the "Little Woman" to find out on the quiet which one the Captain really had in his mind. That was all fair enough, for the other, the rejected, meant to help her sister land this extremely desirable fish; but until they knew neither one could very well retire the least bit for fear the Captain should become discouraged. "He's rather a skittish animal," Maud assured the "Little Woman." "He's got to be encouraged,—led up to it, you know."

Captain Leydon and the "Little Woman" were out for a ride together in the early morning, and he was rather absorbed in an elaborate scheme he was working out in his mind for the summary punishment of "Pig" by means of dacoits, when his companion timidly asked him which of the two Johnston girls he thought the most pleasing.

"Oh, hang the girls!" he ejaculated, in a half-awake sort of way. That was really because he had found them a bit of a nuisance, and because for the instant he had forgotten that his companion was not a brother officer.

Then he raised his head and saw the look of blank amazement in the "Little Woman's" great, wondering eyes. "I beg your pardon," she said, "I didn't quite catch your answer."

"I said, 'hanged if I know,' but I must apologize—forgot that I wasn't alone. I mean, I'm undecided which is really the nicer; they're both so nice, you know." With which lucid and veracious explanation the matter was allowed to drop.

"I can't find out," the "Little Woman" told the girls. "He's so bashful when one commences talking about it that he gets confused."

"Pig" was at first indifferent, then curious. Of course, he heard things, for Leydon was carrying out his commission with a fidelity that amused his brother officers immensely. He and the "Little Woman" were together a great deal. The girls thought it was the funniest sort of love-making for the Captain to be courting Mrs. Greening for one of them. But which one? If they could only find that out, *the* one would take up the running and close in on him rapidly.

The "Little Woman" could not help contrast her husband with her friend. The comparison was not flattering to "Pig," but she smothered it down, and forced herself to go on fretting about Greening.

The Padre of the station, who had not bothered his head about whether Greening led his wife a miserable existence or not, for there wasn't much in his law covering that, also heard little things. He was scandalized. Captain Leydon and this woman who was separated from her husband were nearly always together. Greening was a Christian too—a *proper* church Christian.

The Padre spoke to the Colonel about it, for he loved to put people right morally; that was his prerogative. He came away from his interview with a troubled face. Certainly, the old officer had a great respect for "the cloth," so he modified his language much when he told the Padre to mind his own—ecclesiastical business.

The little Padre took all sorts of means to straighten out the tangle. He preached about the duty of a wife to her husband, about the exceptional sin of violating a certain commandment, and even tried to talk, in a roundabout way, to the "Little Woman" herself.

Like a true diplomat, he commenced by saying that her husband, of course, must be much in the wrong; but she shut him up sharp by saying that if he had come there to abuse her husband, she couldn't listen to him.

He was in despair; they were all possessed of a pig-headed desire to misunderstand him and do the things which were wrong.

When he appealed to the two girls they laughed at him and winked at each other. He caught them at that, and felt it even more than he had the Colonel's unsatisfactory manner. How could he be expected to do good if the whole station were against him?

Nobody was making any progress; things were really in statu quo.

"Pig" was envious and vicious; he hadn't got beyond that point, so his regeneration, so far, was practically nil. The two girls were as far off as ever in discovering who was "it," and Captain Leydon was just as bashful in their presence as he had been the first day.

Progress *was* being made, though Captain Leydon, if he had been accused of it, would have fought the accuser till he admitted that he was mistaken. The Captain was falling in love with the "Little Woman." There was nothing remarkable in this; neither was there anything sinful. His love was *love*.

Then came an order transporting "Pig" to a small police thanna thirty miles away. There was a dacoit complication on at Dakong, in which the native police were supposed to be implicated.

"Pig" gave no sign of redemption before his departure, and the "Little Woman" wept bitterly. "She loves the animal a heap," Leydon told the Major. "This woman nature is an extraordinary thing."

The Major had quiet ways, also an eye that saw things, so he said nothing, but puffed meditatively at his strong Burma cheroot.

There was a telegraph station at Dakong, and one day the song of the wire was that cholera was holding carnival there. This item was suppressed; they must think of the "Little Woman."

Next day the wires sang again. "Pig" had got it. It was dance music to the officers; they laughed.

"Hush, you fellows," said Leydon. "We must think of the 'Little

Woman.' He is an animal, and probably this is a judgment on him; but all the same, she thinks no end of him, and this will crush her."

Then he asked for two days' leave, and rode over to the Johnstons'. "I undertook to bring him back to her," he muttered, as he galloped—galloped fast.

"Your husband's ill up at Dakong," he told her. "Jungle fever, or something, and I'm going up to bring him down. There are no boats up there."

He wondered at his own proficiency as a fictionist as he galloped to Cherroghea Creek, where he had arranged to get a boat with six strong rowers. He drove the boatmen fast; when they wanted to stop and sleep, he drove them faster.

There was no doubt as to who ruled in Dakong when he arrived there—Cholera was King, and Greening and two others the only subjects. The rest had cleared off to the jungle.

It took persuasive force to make the boatmen stick at the job; *zabbar dasti* they call it in India.

Leydon had brandy and chlorodyne, and these he simply poured into Greening, also into the boatmen, with the result that he landed at Kokbang within twenty-four hours from the time he had left there.

They took Greening to the hospital. The Doctor looked at him and said to Leydon: "You had better tell Mrs. Greening that her husband will be dead before sundown; but don't tell her before that time, because—because—she can't come here, you know."

"Send word to the Johnston girls," answered the Captain. "I had better not go near anybody's bungalow until I'm sure none of this accursed thing has stuck to me."

The Doctor looked at him queerly for a minute. Then he said quietly: "Suppose you bunk in my bungalow to-night? I'm all alone and it's devilish dull."

Whether it was that Leydon had talked to Greening coming down in the boat and converted him, or whether it was the cholera had made a Christian of him, nobody knew; but at the last, before the spasms drew the chords of his throat so that he could only stare, with white, glassy eyes, he took the blame of the whole thing on himself—said the "Little Woman" was an angel, only he hadn't known it in time.

But next day there was a fight over a better man, for Leydon was down. The Doctor knew he was slipping away from them. God! how he fought for it, though!

And he died—died with never a word of his love for the "Little Woman" through his lips.

They tried to keep this from her, that Leydon was down, but she heard it; and in the evening, just at dusk, just when the life went out into the dark, a small figure glided up to the steps of the Doctor's

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bungalow, and, as the sentry clanked down the plank floor of the veranda, slipped through the door.

Just inside a strong hand grasped her wrist, and the voice of the Doctor said harshly, "What do you want?"

When he saw the white, haggard face of the "Little Woman" he started and exclaimed: "You here! What do you want? Greening died yesterday over in the hospital."

"I want to see *him*," she said pitifully,—"*Captain Leydon*."

"You're too late—he is dead!" he said softly, catching her in his arms as she slipped to the floor.

"Dead!" she moaned, "dead! I loved him, but he never knew. That sin was only mine."

THE OLD, OLD SONGS

BY WILLIAM ANWYL JONES

WHEN my work is done and the twilight falls,
When the supper-things are put away,
And the spell of my true love's love entralls
And banishes all the cares of day—
Ah, then we sit with our clasped hands
And I ask my love to sing for me
The old, old songs that she used to sing,
When our lives rejoiced in youth's sweet spring,
Ere we ever dreamed of the burning sands
That lie this side of Arcadie!
Oh, the old, old songs—the songs of the heart!
How they soothe life's pain and ease its smart!

THE CRISIS

BY LULU WHEDON MITCHELL

I HAVE balked the will of the sea,
I have conquered the wilderness,
But my heart stands still in the breast of me,
To choose between No and Yes.

A BIVOUAC DE LUXE

By Edward Boltwood

Author of "Adventures of Porteous," "The Stapleton Stories," etc.

M R. GEORGE SLOAN, foreman of the Double-X Ranch, stood upon the threshold of Abe Buntz's Spearfish Palace Emporium and swelled out his chest with the pardonable pride of a man who had just purchased the finest set of bedroom furniture in South Dakota, as per Mr. Buntz's advertisement in the Spearfish *Scimitar*.

"It will cost you money to freight all that rosewood ten miles to Double-X," said Abe.

"I'm glad of it," Mr. Sloan declared. "Load her on to a truck and let her come this afternoon. I'm expecting of the Dook of Massachusetts, and money's no object."

"Reckon you're going to get married, George," insinuated Buntz.

"Not so's you'd notice it. This here furniture is for Mister Chitch-ester, E-squire, of Boston. He's the Eastern boss of the Double-X; he's a-coming out to inspect us, and, Buntz, I calkerlate to fix him up a room at the ranch as'll make him think he's in the Garden of Eden."

Abe nodded approvingly. "Guess he'll be satisfied, all right," he said.

"Dunno," replied Sloan, looking dubious. "The feller's a crank. He's never been west of New England, but he seems to think he knows a whole lot about taking care o' men 'beyond the confines of civilization,' as he calls it in his fool letters. He don't claim to be much on cattle; camp fixings is his strong holt. Last year he sends out a box of lozengers. 'Pears like candy. I gives 'em to John Heffren, who eats 'em and gets sicker'n anybody I ever see get sick and live. Then 'long comes a letter from Chitch-ester, saying them pills was condensed food as they use in the Dutch army. Heffren had ate thirty days' rations in a half hour. Chitch-ester, he's always writing me the darndest stuff about bicycles and tents and camp-stoves, and such truck."

"When's he coming?"

"Most any day now," explained Sloan, gloomily. "Mind you ship that freight so's I get it to-night."

That evening two cow-punchers of the Double-X, Ed. May and John Heffren, were riding across Medicine Bottom, half-way between Spearfish and the ranch.

"We'll stake out at the creek, Ed.," said Heffren, "and camp. This yere pony's beat."

"So'm I. Got nothin' much t'eat, neither. 'F I had Sloan here, I'd fry him. What'd he mean, sendin' us to Powder River 'thout 'nuff grub to keep a cat?"

"Dunno. I'm 'bout done, hungry an' thirsty an' mad an' sleepy an'—whoa up! What's that a-yonder?"

Ed. May pulled his horse and stared at the overturned Studebaker wagon which was reposing on its side by the bank of Medicine Creek. The four mules, still in the traces, gazed reproachfully at the cowboys as they loped nearer.

"Sure, a busted shebang," commented John, "an' the driver, he's dead to the world." Heffren had dismounted and was examining the recumbent form of the charioteer, who lay snoring on the ground.

"What's in the jug alongside of him, John?" demanded May, with a certain delighted note in his voice. "That maverick's name is Muddy Connors. Freights for Buntz."

"Rye, an' it's all gone," announced Heffren, smelling of the demi-john.

The two cow-punchers staked out their horses in the meadow-grass and turned loose the mules. Then May tilted the whiskey-jug. Its emptiness seemed to infuriate him, and his angry eye fell on the disarranged contents of the wagon.

"Hey, there!" he called to John. "Here's a bed. Can we rig it?"

"Betcher life we can," said Mr. Heffren.

Ed. May looked about him with more particular attention and burst into a melodious cry.

"Whoop!" he observed, tearing the sacking from a patent rocking-chair, "how's this? Pretty hot cakes, eh?" He ripped the cover from a massive wash-stand, and then attacked a chest of drawers, and John contemplated him with an appreciative grin.

"Brush out your hair, Heffren," yelled May, brandishing an ornate looking-glass, "and walk into this yere rosewood abode. Get yer ornery self used ter luxury. The hotel is now open and I've took the bridal chamber!"

The next morning when Mr. Brice Chichester clambered into the buck-board in front of the Spearfish Hotel it was easy to detect his eager and joyful anticipation. His mind brimmed already with ideas for the improvement of life on the cattle-range, for his inventive genius had been stirred powerfully by the astonishing stories which had been told to him by the many guileless-looking strangers whom he had interviewed en route. He had ordered the buck-board to be ready at dawn, and now he exhorted French Mike to make all haste.

The managing director was a tall, thin man, with elementary side-whiskers; he wore a pongee helmet, and before the buck-board had gone a mile he offered to present a similar head-dress to the driver. French Mike observed that the boys thereabouts were too handy with a gun for him to take any such risks. This depressed Mr. Chichester, and he did not revive until they encountered the bluff which skirted the bottom-lands of Medicine Creek.

"It would be far better to harness those horses tandem," he declared, as the buck-board began to plunge down the descent.

"Ain't got no time to onhitch jes' now," said Mike. "Hang on, pardner. 'Pears like the trail's washed a leetle."

The Bostonian gasped in the thick cloud of reddish dust; the conveyance pitched like a cat-boat in a tide-rip; and French Mike lashed the jumping horses and talked with them vigorously. When level ground was reached, Mr. Chichester rubbed his eyes and stared about him. Then he rubbed his eyes again. Well might he do so.

Resplendent in the solitude of the plain stood an enormous rose-wood bedstead; and on the wire mattress lay two young men, wrapped in blankets and in slumber. A stately dressing-table had been pressed into duty for culinary purposes and sustained some slices of cold bacon and a battered coffee-pot. A brocaded easy-chair had been overturned in order to protect a pair of saddles from the downfall of dew, and a tall chest of drawers served as a pedestal for a lurid oil-painting and for a mirror which solemnly reflected the surrounding prairie. The heavy magnificence of the furniture appeared to excellent advantage in the rays of the morning sun.

French Mike surveyed the spectacle in a hush of profound awe, but Brice Chichester was more curious. John Heffren poked his head out of the blankets when the buck-board rattled alongside.

"Good-morning," began Mr. Chichester politely. "You seem comfortable here."

"Sure," said Heffren. "This yere is the Powder River outfit of the Double-X Ranch. Drive on," and he prepared to resume his nap.

"Stop a bit," cried the managing director. "This is the most luxurious camping equipment! I do not remember that I have ever seen anything approaching it in completeness. My good man, will you tell me——"

"Oh, don't bother," growled John sleepily. "If yer want a bed, go to th' office an' register."

"But, my word!" exclaimed Chichester. "These appliances for an ordinary bivouac are a revelation!"

"Well, we're shy a couple of pictures and a bath-tub," admitted Heffren.

Ed. May stretched himself and sat suddenly upright, blinking at the visitors.

"Howdy, Mike," said he. "When did you blow in?"

"I'm a-haulin' this gentleman out to the ranch," French Mike replied. "Say," he added maliciously, as he gathered up his reins,— "say, he's the Eastern boss of the Double-X. So long!"

Mr. Chichester was so busily engaged in taking a mental inventory of the astounding camp utensils that he failed to notice the consternation in which he left the cowboys. They both rolled off the mattress and roused Muddy Connors.

"Anyhow, we'll get fired from the Double-X, all right," Mr. Heffren concluded, "and the Widder Major of the Gem Hotel will buy this sweetie o' furniture off of us if we pack it over the State line into Sundance."

The two other men hesitated.

"This evenin' Connors tramps back to Spearfish," urged John, "and tells Buntz he was held up. By that-a-time Ed. an' me has druv this freight over into the gran' old State o' Wyoming and fixed it. Savvy?"

In the meantime Brice Chichester, having made his arrival at the ranch, so perplexed Mr. Sloan by his allusions to the Medicine Creek episode that the foreman was compelled to seek a private explanation from French Mike. The explanation caused him to buckle on his forty-five and saddle a horse.

"May I not ride with you, Mr. Sloan?" asked Chichester. "I should like to see at once further evidences of your genius as an organizer. I should like to add to the highly favorable preliminary report which I am sending to Boston."

The foreman pricked up his ears.

"I refer, of course," went on the Bostonian, "to the wonderful camping arrangement which you have devised for our employés. The equipment is almost incredible. Your services must be priceless here—priceless, Mr. Sloan."

Sloan glared at him with suspicion, with wonder, finally with hope; then he sat down beside Mr. Chichester and conversed with him in a softened and, at times, a trembling voice. In spite of the laughter which threatened him continually, Mr. Sloan's diplomacy was rewarded. He began at once to pull the wires which ultimately ensnared the managing director in a grant of increased salary.

Mr. Chichester, however, never saw the rosewood furniture again. To do so it would have been necessary to go to Sundance in Wyoming—where, indeed, anyone may see it, occupying, as it does, the prominent place of honor in Mrs. Major's Gem Hotel.

THE DECISION

By *Ina Brevoort Roberts*

Author of "*The Lifting of a Finger*," etc.



TWILIGHT slipped down over the stately old house set in the midst of broad stretches of velvet lawn, and lights began to twinkle in the windows, but Mildred Harmon and her lover still lingered outside under an ancient oak, talking in low tones of their marriage, which was to take place in the autumn.

"Alice comes to-morrow," Mildred said, speaking gently and with the rhythmical intonation that is one of the hall-marks of breeding. "Are you going to be nice to her?"

"Of course," Leonard answered readily. He was a handsome, powerful young fellow, with something peculiarly likable about him. "Am I not always nice?" he added, his eyes smiling into hers.

"To me, yes," replied Mildred quickly; "to other people——" she hesitated; "of course, you're not ever rude,—you couldn't be that,—but I can't say you're often cordial."

Mildred's lover moved his chair closer to hers, so that he could slip an arm about her waist.

"I'm sorry, dear," he said in a low tone. "I'm afraid you're right, and I'm not always all that I should be to other people—to your friends. I'll try to do better, but I see you so seldom. When we are married I promise you shall have no cause for complaint."

"Seldom!" exclaimed Mildred, in a tone meant to hold reproof, but which only told that she was pleased,—“you see me every day.”

"Yes, but not alone, except now and again for a little while. And when this friend of yours comes I suppose things will be worse than ever. I'm going to be nice to her for your sake, but I hope she is a person of tact. I must have you to myself sometimes."

"Alice had plenty of tact when we were at school together," replied Mildred thoughtfully. "I hope you *will* be nice to her, Leonard. I'm going to depend on you to help me make her visit pleasant. I feel so sorry for her."

Leonard stretched out his free arm and took one of his sweetheart's hands. "Why?" he asked.

"Well, she's poor and has to earn her living by teaching. It's not on that account I'm sorry for her, though, but because she's so alone. She is without a relative. Think of having no one in the world with

whom one is first!" Mildred gave a little shudder, and her hand closed over Leonard's with a convulsive clasp.

"It must be rough," he admitted as he returned the pressure.

"I sometimes think I have more than my share of blessings," the girl went on. "Alice seems to lack so many of the little things that, trifling as they are compared to the great ones, do help to make life pleasant. She hasn't even a pretty name. 'Alice' always makes me think of the girls in novels whose lovers jilt them. And fancy being called 'Miss Brown'!"

"It hasn't an attractive sound," admitted Leonard. "Well, we'll do all we can to give Miss Brown a jolly time while she's here—dearest." He added the last word softly and after a pause.

"Thank you, Leonard." Mildred too spoke softly, and her voice had a little, rippling note of joyful wonder in it. "Shall we go in now?"

The young man rose. "Yes," he said; "your father wants a game of chess, and afterwards I'm going to get you to play for me if you will."

Mildred nodded, smiling as she slipped her arm through his, and together they moved slowly up the steps of the broad piazza and so into the house.

II.

It was a week later, and Mildred's guest made one of the group when the Harmon family sat out under the trees in the spring twilight.

Alice Brown was too ill-dressed and tired-looking to be pretty, but her blue eyes were pleasantly frank and her manner gay and charming; evidently she bore no malice against fate for denying her most of the good things of life.

She had already made a friend of every member of the household. Mildred's father and mother and the servants liked her, and Leonard had the night before admitted to Mildred that she was a "nice, bright little woman."

Perhaps his approval was partly the result of a certainty that Alice was "a person with tact." She had proved this by her adroit way of managing that Leonard should always have a little time alone with Mildred before his departure. She never left them with the feeling that she had gone because they wished her away; she always put her withdrawal as a favor.

In their gratitude Mildred and her lover left nothing undone in their efforts to make Alice's visit something to be remembered. There were lawn parties, picnics, and a dance given in her honor; indeed, scarcely a day or evening passed that did not hold some pleasant gayety.

Alice was radiantly happy. "I never had such a good time in my

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life," she told Mildred, who, thinking of her lover, pitied the other girl for being content with so little.

"Did you never have a lover, Alice?" she inquired.

"I've had offers of marriage," Alice replied,—“one from a wealthy merchant in the town where I teach, and one from the principal of my school, but I did not care for either of them. I am odd and old-fashioned in my views, and still cling to the idea that somewhere in the world is a man who was made for me and I for him. Until I meet that man I shall never marry.”

"I don't consider that an odd idea," said Mildred, smiling; "I think the same way myself."

Leonard did his duty manfully, although, as young men were scarce in the neighborhood, it usually fell to his lot to escort both girls on any expedition that chanced to be afoot. Indeed, so far from complaining, he seemed rather to enjoy Alice's society. "I like her," he told Mildred. "She has common-sense, which most girls lack, and then she's so fond of you."

"I'm glad you and Leonard get on well together," Mildred said to her guest one morning as the two girls sat sewing in the former's room. "It's such a disappointment when two people one is fond of don't like each other. You must spend your vacations with us when we are married. You are the first one of my girl friends Leonard has ever really liked. He said last night that you had common-sense."

Alice laughed. "One good compliment deserves another," she declared, "so I will say that I consider Mr. Harvey a person of intelligence and taste. Seriously, Mildred, he is a clever, charming fellow, and you are a lucky girl."

Mildred's heart warmed towards her friend; no people are so easy to love as those who consider us fortunate. "I know it," she said. "Leonard is—well, he is all I could wish him, and that's saying a good deal," she ended with a happy laugh.

III.

It was a perfect afternoon. Alice and Leonard, in a row-boat that was drifting slowly down the river that ran past the Harmon estate, had remarked half a dozen times upon the satisfactory state of the weather.

Mildred was not with them. The three had planned a long row that would keep them out till dinner-time, but at the last moment visitors had arrived and Mildred had insisted that the other two should go without her.

"You can come back to the landing for me at five o'clock," she said. "The Carltons will surely have gone by that time."

So, reluctantly, Alice and Leonard had started.

"Pretty, isn't it?" observed Leonard presently when they were upon the water. He had been watching Alice as she looked at the wooded shore that seemed to be gliding slowly and magically by.

"It is lovely! lovely! lovely!" Her voice had dropped with each repetition of the word. "The country about here is all beautiful," she went on. "Those rolling hills laid out in squares like a chess-board give such a pleasing suggestion of prosperity. Where I live the land is wild and uncultivated."

Leonard did not reply. Just then the world seemed all shimmer and content, and much talk useless and discordant. He did not even apologize for leaving the silence unbroken, for he felt, without taking the trouble to think about the matter, that Alice would not misunderstand silence any more than she did speech. He had noticed that she never had to have things explained to her.

And so it was a long time before he finally looked up and said: "Tell me about your life. You seldom speak of yourself, and I really want to know more of the friend Mildred tells me is to visit us often when—when we are married." The pink glow of Leonard's skin deepened as he bent over the oars.

Alice obligingly gave him a short sketch of her history. It was not a dramatic story, and would certainly have been dull but for the droll, whimsical touch she contrived to put into the telling. Apparently she had that precious gift, denied to some women, a sense of humor, and it had served to lift even her colorless life above common-placeness.

When Leonard remembered to look at his watch it was five o'clock, and they were two miles from the landing. Some time before he had moved to a comfortable seat in the bow, letting the boat drift; now he took the oars again, the pleasant gleam that seldom left them gone out of his eyes.

After telling Alice the time he did not speak again, but bent to his task with a quiet, determined energy that sent the boat rapidly along. He had forgotten Mildred. This was the thought that burned in his brain and made the very stillness seem to cry out a reproach. He did not know whom he hated more, himself or the woman in the other end of the boat. And yet it was neither her fault nor his. They had simply forgotten.

After a swift glance at him that left her own face white, Alice did not look at Leonard again, but kept her eyes upon the water, which the reflection of trees and sky had turned to a pool of green and sapphire. When the boat-house came in sight Alice waved her hand to the white-robed figure on the landing.

"I've been waiting ever so long," cried Mildred gayly as soon as

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they were within hearing distance. "I expect you miscalculated the time it would take you to get back with the tide against you."

IV.

THE color of trees and sky deepened as the days went by and spring gave place to summer.

The weather was too warm now for festivities, and so Mildred and her guest passed the time quietly.

During the day the two girls stayed within the house, which was kept dark and cool; at sunset they went out to the porch to meet Leonard, and later, when there was a moon, Mildred and Leonard would row upon the river.

Alice was not often with them. She was gay as ever, but a close observer might have discovered that this was because a resolute will kept her so, and of late in the evenings her inclination had seemed equally divided between chess with Mr. Harmon and the solitude of her room.

At this time Mildred was very happy. There had crept into her joy a subtle, spiritual element that had been the only thing needed to render it complete. Leonard's tenderness towards her had grown and deepened until it seemed too rare and beautiful almost to think of; she could only feel, with a rush of gratitude, that no woman could ever have been loved as she was.

Absorbed as she was in her happiness, it was some time before Mildred noticed that her friend had changed in more ways than by growing thinner and losing the pink flush her month at the Harmon house had brought to her cheeks.

"Alice says she must go next week," Mildred told Leonard one evening as they walked to the boat-house. "I'm so sorry. I wanted her to stay all summer. She's changed lately, Leonard. She never wants to go anywhere with us any more. When I spoke to her about it the other day she said we had been as nice as possible, but she was sure we must be tired of always having her with us. I hope we haven't given her any cause to feel so."

Leonard did not at once reply.

"I wouldn't worry, dear," he said finally. "I don't believe we have. Are you sure you're warm enough without a wrap?"

"We must get up something before Alice goes," returned Mildred. "A picnic would be nice, I think. Yes, I'm plenty warm enough, thank you, Leonard; you're as careful of me as if I were an orchid."

V.

ON the morning of the picnic Mildred met Leonard on his arrival with a troubled face.

"I'm sorry, dear, but I shall not be able to go to-day," he said,

without waiting for her to speak. "I hope you will not miss me too much."

Mildred's face brightened as she measured Leonard's disappointment by his look of unhappiness. She did not ask his reason; it was something that could not be helped, of course.

"I shouldn't enjoy the picnic without you," she said, "but I need not go either. I went to Alice's room just now and found her with a wretched headache." There was in Mildred's voice a note of the half-contemptuous pity that the people who do not have headaches feel for those who do. "Alice would not hear of my staying at home," she went on; "she said there was nothing I could do for her, but if you're not to be there I don't care about going."

For the space of several seconds the young man stood musing with a thoughtful face.

"Perhaps you'd better go," he said at last. "It hardly seems right for us both to stay away; we planned the affair, you know. I'll row up this afternoon and come home with you."

And this was how it was arranged.

Half an hour later the picnic party started up the river in launches, two servants following in a row-boat with the lunch. Alice, who watched their departure from behind closed blinds, turned away from the window with a puzzled face. Mildred had not told her of Leonard's changed plans.

At one o'clock she crept downstairs and ate her luncheon in the solitary dining-room.

She was looking pale, but her headache was quite gone, she said in answer to the butler's inquiry. While she was at the table she was told that Mr. Harvey was in the library and had asked for her.

Alice's face flushed and grew pale again. "Tell him I am ill and cannot see anyone," she answered.

The maid left the room, but returned shortly. "Mr. Leonard was sorry; he wouldn't keep Miss Brown long, but wouldn't she please see him for a moment."

With the air of one vanquished, Alice went into the library. Leonard closed the door after her without speaking.

"Are you mad?" she asked quietly. "Did you forget that servants——"

"I forgot everything but you," Leonard interrupted. "I could only remember that you are to go away to-morrow and that I must see you alone. I determined to stay away from that picnic because to be near you, and yet so far away, has grown to be more than I can bear. When I learned that you were not going either I saw my chance and took it. But you need not fear. I haven't come to try to per-

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suade you to go against your conscience. All I ask is to hold you in my arms just once, and hear you say 'I love you.'"

Alice stepped back, away from him. "I shall never say that." She spoke decidedly, and there was reproach mingled with the sadness in her voice.

The man's expression changed from eager entreaty to anger. "How women cling to the letter of the law!" he exclaimed bitterly. "Well, tell me that you don't love me then; I'll believe you." His tone was mocking now.

Alice was silent.

A look of happiness flashed into Leonard's face, and vanished like a gleam of sunshine in a storm.

"You do love me," he cried, "although you will not tell me so. Perhaps you are afraid my determination to do what is right will falter. And yet, is it right? That you feel no doubt I know by the course you have taken during these horrible weeks when we have had to avoid each other without seeming to do so. And I have honestly tried to share your belief, but I can't—quite. It's a diabolical situation. I've come across the same thing often in novels, and I've always despised the man who could hold to so mistaken a notion of honor as to marry one woman when he loved another."

"I know," said Alice quickly. "But books are one thing, and life is another."

Leonard, who had been pacing the floor, stopped suddenly. "The Bible," he said, speaking as one who talks to convince himself, "tells us to do as we would be done by. I wouldn't want Mildred or—or any woman to marry me, loving another man."

"I know," said Alice again wearily. "I've gone over it all a thousand times. Were I in Mildred's place and she in mine, I wouldn't want her to do what I am doing. And yet that is what she would do. Nor can I do anything else. The other way may be right, but if it is, I cannot do right. I cannot hurt her so. And you—you may argue against it, to me and to yourself, but it isn't in you to do anything but marry Mildred."

Alice stopped suddenly. Leonard was staring at her, his eyes dilated, his breath coming short. "How well you know me," he murmured wonderingly; "how completely you understand. But I haven't asked you to change your decision, dear," he continued after a pause. "I only say you are cruel to deprive me of this hour I have risked so much for. Is it too much I ask you to leave me, as help through the years I must live without you—the memory of a kiss?"

Alice took a step forward. Her eyes were luminous, her mouth smiling and tender. "I shall leave you something better," she said softly—"the memory of a kiss withheld, a rose that will not fade, a

song that is deathless. Oh, can't you feel the sacredness of it? Don't you see that since we cannot kill this love of ours, we must take care that it makes us better and nobler? Since we must hide it in our hearts, let it be like a prisoned fragrance, all the sweeter for its bondage."

Her listener looked as if he would have crushed her to his heart, but he only said quietly, "You are right."

He turned and started for the door, and as he did so a look came into the girl's eyes that was pitiful, it was so loving and tender and sad. When he faced her again at the threshold the look had faded.

"Tell me that you care for me," Leonard said. "You cannot refuse to do that."

Alice put up an appealing hand. "Go, go," she entreated. "Don't you see that I cannot bear any more? Oh, it must be some horrible, horrible dream."

Before her words had died away on the air the curtains on their right parted and Mildred stood beside them.

"What must be some horrible dream?" she asked, looking from one to the other in an astonished way. "Leonard!" The last word was a cry.

There had not been time for the man and the woman she surprised to assume masks; the very air, even, was tense with suppressed feeling.

Mildred's glance rested on her lover with a look of piteous appeal. When his eyes fell before hers she seemed to summon new forces, as if bracing herself for an ordeal. Her demeanor was a pathetic mingling of girlish pride and womanly dignity.

At this moment Alice spoke. "Leonard cannot explain, Mildred; it is I who must tell you." She talked rapidly and evenly. "He is here because I asked him to come. I wanted to see him alone before I go away. I"—Alice paused, shrinking a little from what she read in Mildred's eyes—"I love him."

The other girl shrank too and turned towards her lover. "And Leonard?" she whispered.

"Was as surprised as you are," interposed Alice quickly, as Leonard was about to speak. "Now you see why he could not explain. He would have tried to dissemble, to shield me from your pity. Even now some foolish notion of honor is urging him to deny my words. I am grateful for his generous intention, but it is better for all concerned that——"

With a shuddering sigh Mildred sank into a chair and broke into uncontrollable weeping. When Leonard knelt beside her and tried to soothe her she cried the more, but she let him put his arms about her and draw her head to his shoulder.

"Leonard, Leonard," she sobbed, clinging to him, "for just a

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second I thought you did not care for me. Don't you know—can't you guess what I suffered? And Alice—oh, poor Alice, whom you don't love."

Mildred rose and, crossing the room, stood before the other girl with her hands out. "I am so sorry, so sorry," she murmured brokenly. "Is there nothing I can do?"

"No, nothing," answered Alice. She had maintained throughout the interview a curious quiet that made Leonard feel as if he must cry aloud. "Unless," she added with a faint, a very faint, note of pleading in her voice, "you can tell me that you do not despise me for having let him know——"

It was but a moment that Mildred hesitated, yet she did hesitate before she said slowly: "No, I do not despise you. I will go away now and let you say good-by to him."

She went to Leonard and laid a hand on his breast. "Be kind to her," she whispered, and went quickly out of the room.

When she was gone Leonard turned to Alice with a fierceness that was born half of anger and the other half of shame.

"Do you think I will play the part you have thrust upon me?" he cried hotly. "When I tried to meet Mildred's eyes and failed, I saw myself for what I am—a dishonorable, unmanly weakling for having come to beg a word and a kiss from one woman when I was betrothed to another. Do you imagine for a moment that I could let her go on thinking you would do the thing I despise myself for? Do you suppose I can bear to have her believe you so dishonorable, so—so unwomanly? Do you think I want you to despise me more than you do already? I shall tell Mildred the truth."

Alice shook her head. "I don't despise you," she said sadly, "because I know the strength of your temptation, but Mildred would. And she must not be robbed of her faith in you. That would be worse than losing your love. Besides, I can bear suffering and she could not; it would kill her. Mildred must not know. You must keep silent because—because I ask it. I can't explain it to you, this feeling that one woman can have for another, but don't you see—she is my friend. God knows I love you, and yet"—her voice rose and took on a more decided ring—"it wasn't for your sake that I said what I did, it was for her."

A second later Alice had gone, closing the door behind her.

THE FULL CUP

BY RUTH HALL

IF happiness pour in thy cup
With rich intent to fill,

Carry it heedfully, heedfully.
Remember it will spill.

A FAIR FEE

By Bernice C. Caughey



THE fiat had gone forth. James Allen must ride possessively around a thousand ewes before there should be added unto him the fairest maid in all the Pecos Valley, Mercreda Torres. So ruled old Pedro, Mercreda's father, and Allen knew the Medes' and Persians' laws were weak, wind-shaken reeds beside the solid rock of Pedro's grim determination.

Poor Jim! He did not even own the mustang on which to do the riding. As for the ewes—— Jim rushed from Pedro's presence in a sudden passion, and the tiny village of adobe houses set in the middle of New Mexico dropped into dim perspective as Jim's long, angry strides bore him towards the range which rimmed the valley.

The full blaze of noon held the barren land in thrall. A dry wind whispered through the withered grass and shook the ghostly sagebrush. Above the valley a treeless plain stretched out to meet a turquoise sky. The white wool of a dozen flocks relieved the dulness of the landscape.

When the young man had walked his passion off, he faced the situation bravely and made his plans.

Old Pedro had a double purpose in the promulgation of this edict. Jim was a lawyer. He had gone to school in Denver, had raked and scraped and pinched to get his education, and had planned to remain there to practise, but when the time came to leave the valley his widowed mother had fallen ill with a tedious malady, and Jim, of course, stayed with her that she might be among her people. Jim's mother was a Mexican, as was Mercreda's father, though the other side of each house came from good New England stock, and Pedro, fearful of the Yankee blood in each, sought to bind Jim to the valley.

The young man opened up a modest office in the village and flung a shining shingle to the lazy breeze that crept down from the range. But fees were scarce as molars on a hen-farm. Might ruled in the valley. The Mexicans and greasers settled their differences with fists and knives, and Jim eked out his scanty income by working at the dipping-station just outside the village.

In a year's time Jim had gathered a hundred ewes into his tiny corral. Fits of alternate hope and despair had bridged the interval. When a ewe gave birth to twins, Mercreda straightway predicted that an epidemic had set in, and rosy-fingered Hope plied the calculating pencil on a double basis. But when a gay ranchero rode into town, or

a blithe young cowboy from the foot-hills swung through the village streets, despair held Jim in its paralyzing clutch.

But a great day dawned for Jim and for Merceda. It found the former, clad in buckskin pants and jumper, busy at the dipping-station. The flocks of Tony Gomez filled the corrals and were struggling through the annual dipping process to prevent disease. Jim, the erudite, held the post of honor on a raised platform above the steaming vat. From the yards below a narrow chute led towards him, up which a steady stream of sheep was forced by the wily colliers. Jim dropped the frightened creatures one by one into the hot sulphur dip with the nonchalance of a housewife shelling peas, and shouted orders to the Mexicans armed with throat-hooks who guided the floundering sheep through the long, narrow vat towards the dripping-pens.

From his elevation Jim saw a vast flock of lambs draw near outside the dipping-station, surrounded by snapping colliers and dark-skinned herders. A dusty horseman plunged into view, a burly Westerner, whose name was known to every sheepman on the range, and asked for the owner of the station. The owner was absent from the valley and there was no one to represent him. Jim called old Gomez, who came forth with glowering face and angry mien. The stranger demanded immediate possession. He made the startling statement that he had contracted for the station for the entire week, and drew forth a written document to substantiate his claim. He explained his haste, and insisted that the Mexican should give way to his flocks. He was under contract with a score of ranchmen in Colorado. A special train was to meet him at the nearest station, and the law required that the lambs should be dipped before crossing the State line.

With mellifluent flow of Spanish vowels, in striking contrast to his volcanic manner, old Gomez called upon the residents of heaven to witness his intention, and the fires of hell to eternally consume him if he budged an inch for a luridly modified Yankee. The stockman coaxed, threatened, and finally turned his pony's head towards the village for legal assistance.

Jim hurried home to change his clothes, and was quietly seated in his office when the stranger sputtered in. Jim explained the futility of the usual legal process when the ugly Mexicans were aroused and suggested compromise, to which the stockman gladly consented. All day Jim camped on Gomez's trail. His native instinct, illumined by his Yankee wit, won the day. With smooth words and twenty dollars the corrals were cleared. The delighted stockman slapped Jim on the back and told him to come to the hotel that evening for his fee.

Jim hurried home to consult with his mother, and stopped on the way to tell Merceda. "I ought to have fifty dollars," he insisted, "for it was worth that to him."

Mercreda squeezed his hand, and his mother gazed proudly upon the man who could earn fifty dollars in a single day.

Arrayed in his bravest apparel, Jim sallied forth, walking on air, but before he reached the little 'dobe hotel he gradually neared the earth again. He was obliged to stop and recall Mercreda's proud look and his mother's wonderment to keep his courage at the proper pitch. "What if the stockman should offer me five dollars?" Jim asked himself. A cold chill pierced his spine at the thought.

The stockman met him with a cheerful greeting. "Well, sir," he began, when they were comfortably seated, "what do I owe you? Let's get the matter settled."

Jim hesitated and cleared his throat. "It saved you considerable, sir," he ventured.

"I know it did, and I am willing to pay for it," was the reply.

But Jim was loath to cast the die.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," said the stockman; "I'll just spread out here on my knee what I think the job is worth, and you can tell me if it is satisfactory."

All hope of fifty dollars vanished, and Jim was mustering up his courage to face Mercreda.

The stockman drew a huge wallet from an inside pocket and carefully untied it. Jim watched him moodily, and saw him draw out a bill and smooth it carefully upon his knee; another one was added and another, until five one-hundred-dollar bills lay clingly together. "How's that?" asked the stockman laconically.

Jim could not reply at once. By a sudden metamorphosis the timid sheep-dipper was transformed into the successful young attorney. His head was held erect, a bright spot burned in either cheek, a blaze of triumph shone in his eyes. His palms pressed hard against his rigid knees in a desperate effort to appear calm and unconcerned. Presently his power of speech returned. "Better make it another fifty," he said, and there was a ring in his voice as if New Mexico were his.

"I'll do it just for luck," replied the stockman.

Next morning when Jim went out to feed his flock he found it had been augmented by nine hundred ewes, each bearing on its left ear old Pedro's brand. A trim mustang was tethered near the gate. A scrap of paper clung to the bridle, on which was scrawled in Pedro's writing, "I mek prezent to my son Jeem."

Jim swung himself into the saddle. Twice round the little flock he raced and disappeared down the road in a cloud of dust. The mustang seemed to know its rider's mind, for when they reached the hedge in front of Pedro's cottage he leaped it like a rabbit. A moment more and Jim stood on the tiny porch with his arms about Mercreda.

FRANKLIN IN GERMANY

By J. G. Rosengarten



FRANKLIN wrote on June 13, 1766, from London to his wife: "To-morrow I set out with my friend, Dr. (now Sir John) Pringle, on a journey to Pyrmont, where he goes to drink the waters. We must be back at furthest in eight weeks. I purpose to leave him at Pyrmont and visit some of the principalities nearest to it, and call for him again when the time for our return draws nigh." (Sparks's Franklin, Vol. VII., p. 320.) In the collection of Franklin Papers at the American Philosophical Society is the original or perhaps retained copy (how did busy men find time then to keep copies of even their letters to their wives?) of this letter, and another of October 11, in which he writes to his wife: "I received your kind letter of August 26. Scarce anyone else wrote to me by that opportunity. I suppose they imagin'd I should not be returned from Germany;" and on December 13: "I wonder you had not heard of my return from Germany. I wrote by the August packet and by a ship from Holland just as I was coming over."

When Francis Hopkinson, son of Franklin's friend, reached London late in July, 1766, to begin his studies at the Temple, he found that Franklin was in Germany, and he had to wait his return before he could advise his father of the kindly welcome given him, due perhaps as much to his own success at the College of Philadelphia as to his father's recommendation. Franklin was very proud of the college, largely his work, and of the remarkable young men who, with Hopkinson, belonged to its first graduates. Sparks says in a note on p. 326 of Vol. VII. of his "Franklin's Works:" "Franklin had recently made a tour in Germany, accompanied by Sir John Pringle, as intimated in a preceding letter. He visited Hannover, Göttingen, and some of the other principal cities and universities, and received many flattering attentions from distinguished persons. The following letter affords a favorable testimony of the estimation in which he was held by learned men in Germany." The original Latin is printed in Sparks; the following is a rough translation:

"S. P. D. John Frederick Hartmann to Dr. Franklin.

"Often the pleasant recollection returns of the day I saw you and talked with you for the first time. I regret

extremely that I had neither time nor opportunity to show you electrical experiments worthy of you. Do not think I was at all to blame. Prince Schwarzburg-Rudolstadt, with whom I have had much correspondence, counted on meeting you on your visit to Germany, and regrets that he could not see you at Göttingen, and sends you his greetings. He reached Göttingen on the very day you left it and thus lost the hope of seeing you. Meantime a German prince asks me to put up lightning rods on his estates, and I ask you for a precise description of your plans in America. You shall have all the credit and honor. I want to complete as far as I can a history of electricity, and as yours is the first name on that subject, I hope to give an account worthy of your experiments."

Dated, with the usual compliments, "Hannover, 1777, Calends of October."

Parton says in his "Franklin" (Vol. I., p. 492): "Sir John Pringle was the Queen's physician and one of Franklin's most intimate companions," and (p. 506) "probably through him Franklin found means to forward papers to the King," and (p. 523) through him Franklin presented to the Queen a sample of American silk grown in Pennsylvania. He also (p. 533) refers to their journey together in Holland and (p. 552) to his first visit in Paris with Sir John Pringle. Hale's "Franklin and France" says (Vol. I., p. 3): "The year before [1766] Franklin and Sir John Pringle had travelled together very pleasantly in the Netherlands and Germany. In 1767 they paid a six weeks' visit to Paris." Bigelow in his "Franklin's Works" (Vol. III., p. 468), after giving Franklin's letter to his wife of June 13, 1766, says: "It is much to be regretted that we have no journal or any satisfactory account of Dr. Franklin's visit to the Continent this summer. He seems to have made no notes, and to have written no letters during his absence, which are calculated in the least to satisfy our curiosity. We have, however, a glimpse of him and of his companion while at Göttingen, which illustrates the very distinguished and durable impression made in whatsoever society he appeared." In the "Biography of John D. Michaelis," p. 102, occurs the following statement, which was translated from the fly-leaf of a volume in the Huntington collection of Frankliniana in the Metropolitan Museum of New York: "In the summer of 1766 I had the opportunity of making two agreeable acquaintances. Pringle and Franklin came to Göttingen, and were presented to me by student Münchhausen. I once had a curious conversation with Franklin at the table, when he dined with me. We talked much about America, about the savages, the rapid growth of the English colonies, the growth of the population, its duplication in twenty-five years, etc. I said that when I was in London in 1741 I

might have learned more about the condition of the Colonies by English books and pamphlets, had I then thought seriously of what I had even then expressed to others, that they would one day release themselves from England. People laughed at me, but I still believed it. He answered me with his earnest and expressive face: 'Then you were mistaken. The Americans have too much love for their mother country.' I said, 'I believe it, but almighty interest would soon outweigh that love or extinguish it altogether.' He could not deny that this was possible, but secession was impossible, for all the American towns of importance, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, could be destroyed by bombardment. This was unanswerable. I did not then suspect that I was speaking to the man who, a few years later, outraged in England, would take such an active part in the accomplishment of my contradicted prophecy." To this was appended the following note, presumably by student Münchhausen: "At that time I was studying in Göttingen, and had the opportunity of knowing both men. I remember well that Franklin, and I know not wherefore, was much more interesting to me than Pringle. Just in that summer also Lessing came to Göttingen. He, our otherwise great countryman, was far from pleasing me as well as both these Englishmen. These Britons, decried for their pride, were very sociable and well informed. The German, on the contrary, was very haughty and controversial."

Bigelow also adds the story, told in Hale's "Franklin," that Pringle resigned the presidency of the Royal Society rather than yield to the King's wish in a matter in which the King was wrong in his desire to forward the interests of a favored friend at the expense of that venerable scientific body.

The "Life of Sir John Pringle," by Andrew Kippis, prefaced to six of his discourses, London, 1783, attests Franklin's wise choice and good fortune in having such a friend and fellow-traveller. We meet Michaelis in "The American Revolution and German Literature," by John A. Walz, Harvard University, reprinted from *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. XVI., Baltimore, 1901. He says: "John D. Michaelis, the great Orientalist, met Franklin at Göttingen in 1766, and in his autobiography speaks very pleasantly about his American acquaintance." Michaelis was very glad, however, to get his son an appointment as surgeon with the Hessian division of soldiers sent to America by the British government when the Revolutionary War was being waged, for the pay was very good and he was promised employment for life on his return. When his wife met her husband on his return from his American expedition, she wrote home of the wretched spectacle of the troops shipped to America, and her contempt for the

Elector who sold his people to get money with which to build palaces and provide for his extravagant way of living in them.

In a Doctor's Thesis by an American we find mention of Franklin in Germany. "The Relation of German Publicists to the American War of Independence, 1775-1783. Inaugural Dissertation for the Doctor's Degree of the Philosophic Faculty of the University of Leipsic submitted by Herbert P. Gallinger, Amherst, Massachusetts, Leipsic, 1900," is a pamphlet in German of seventy-seven pages, with an additional page giving the details of Dr. Gallinger's life. On p. 8, etc., he says: "Franklin visited Germany in 1766, and in Göttingen, where he met Achenwall and Schlözer, awakened interest for the Colonies." In a foot-note he adds: "Achenwall published in the *Hannoverian Magazine*, beginning of 1767, p. 258, etc., 'Some Observations on North America and the British Colonies, from verbal information furnished by Mr. B. Franklin.'" At the close, the struggle between the mother country and the colonies is described entirely from the American point of view. It is clear that Achenwall was convinced by Franklin. In closing he says: "I doubt not that other men of learning in this country have used their acquaintance with this honored man [Franklin] as well as I. Could they be persuaded to give the public their noteworthy conversation with him, it would be doing the public a great benefit." These observations were reprinted twice, in 1769 at Frankfurt and Stuttgart, and in 1777 at Helmstedt. They appear to be the only account of the dispute over the constitutional questions at issue in America in the German language published before 1776.

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Mr. Gallinger's Thesis gives quite an exhaustive account of the later publications in Germany on the American struggle for independence, and supplies too the names of many men famous in German literature who heartily supported the American side. At Cassel, the capital of the Elector of Hesse, who sent the largest contingent of German soldiers to America to fight for the British supremacy, there was a group of writers defending the American right to appeal to arms. A succession of serial publications by Archenholz and Schlözer and other Göttingen professors, who had met Franklin there ten years before the outbreak of the Revolution, gave in full the official and other papers issued by Americans and their friends in England and on the Continent, even more fully than those of the English government and its defenders. Brunswick too, whence the next largest body of soldiers, under Riedesel, came to America, had writers and publishers ready to defend the cause of the Americans. Great Britain employed German pamphleteers to justify its treatment of the rebellious colonies. Schlözer printed letters from America, written in 1757, predicting

the subsequent struggle and attributing the outbreak of the Revolution to the prohibition of the coasting trade, and its continuance to ambitious factions, not a majority of the people. Franklin's influence, even with the Göttingen professors and publicists, was not powerful and enduring enough to prevent most of them from taking the side of the British government in their writings.

The close relation between the Hanoverian government and that of Great Britain, the King himself Elector of Hanover, may well account for the line taken by his Göttingen professors, for it was a time of personal government in both countries, and the wish of the petty German sovereign was absolute with all his subjects. From Berlin, sometimes under the pseudonym of Philadelphia, came pamphlets favoring the American cause, while Hamburg and Frankfurt published works on America of all sorts of political views. One author said that Franklin spoke with true insight of the American cause. Others referred to his published writings as of the highest authority. Translations of his scientific and other papers were published in Germany, where his name and fame were familiar.

Berlin at that time had two newspapers, which appeared every other day, each of four octavo pages, and in both of them there was a strong tone of sympathy for the American cause and hope for its success. The English too had, of course, their organs and agencies in Germany, but they were mostly limited to a republication of official reports and legal arguments in support of the mother country. The Americans had on their side the poets, who sang away lustily in their behalf. Schlözer, one of the leading editors of news from and about the American struggle, and strongly in favor of British rule, claimed that the whole loss of German soldiers sold for service in America was only eleven thousand eight hundred and fifty-three. Kapp corrects this and makes it twelve thousand five hundred and sixty-two from official data, and the little difference shows that Schlözer must have had access to them too.

No sooner was the war over, than Sprengel, professor in Halle, published its history, in 1784, and it was reprinted in that and the following years in frequent editions. Berlin followed the hint of Frederick the Great in showing hostility to England by expressions of friendship for America. Kant sympathized with America, and at Königsberg in 1782 was issued a book that radically justified the Revolution. Assuming its success, the German publicists gave a great deal of attention to the industrial results of independence and foresaw the advantages sure to spring from it. Perhaps the most important book was Moser's "America After the Peace of 1783," in three volumes,

Leipsic, 1784, mostly geographical and statistical details, but in it the learned Professor gravely charges Franklin and his associates with perjury towards the mother country. Of course, the question of public opinion in a country so subdivided as Germany then was is quite unlike that which exists to-day, yet it is clear that in spite of the influence of professors and editors largely enlisted from one motive or another in support of the English cause, there was a strong and lively sympathy for that of America. Perhaps a knowledge of the Germans sent against them may have justified their hope of a favorable result,—at least Freneau's version of Rivington's "Last Will" shows the popular opinion, confirmed by current report, in America:

"To Baron Knyphausen, his heirs and assigns,
I bequeath my old Hock and my Burgundy wines.
To a true Hessian drunkard, no liquors are sweeter,
And I know the old man is no foe to the creature."

The German commander who fell at Trenton, Colonel Rahl, was notorious for his love of the table, and his negligence to insure the safety of his post is attributed to his plentiful potations on Christmas Eve.

A recent paper in the *Americana Germanica*, supplemented by that in *Modern Language Notes* for June, 1901, by Walz, of Harvard, attests the influence of Franklin in Germany. Klopstock and Herder, Jacobi and Heyne, Schiller and Goethe, all praise him.

Lafayette in a letter to Franklin, written in 1786, tells him that in a recent tour in Germany a thousand questions were asked about Franklin. Numerous applications were made to him for commissions in the American army, and his failure to secure them no doubt sharpened the attacks on him. Schlözer, who had met Franklin in Göttingen, counted himself fortunate in profiting by public interest in his publications on the struggle between England and America.

The story of the German soldier sent by his sovereign to America, of life there, and of the return home is told in many versions by contemporary dramatists, from Schiller in his "Kabale und Liebe," through a long list gathered by Walz in his exhaustive paper. Some of them make quite a feature of the American wives brought to Germany by German officers. There are at least two families of Newport, R. I., who still keep in touch with their German kinsfolk, descendants of the marriage of two Newport girls to our friends the enemy, and several Southern families have had the same extension of their foreign relations. The number of German soldiers remaining and marrying in this country must have been quite large, for there are many families of note thus descended from Hessians.

Franklin was too busy a man to make much reference to so brief an incident in his long and active life as his short and only visit to Germany. From it and through his intercourse with Göttingen professors, all men who contributed to and helped make what there was of public opinion in Germany, he undoubtedly influenced it, all unconsciously perhaps, and thus helped to make the judgment of the people and their rulers favorable to the Americans in their struggle for independence. Little as Frederick the Great liked liberty and rebellion to gain it, his hostility to the German princes who sold their soldiers to Great Britain, after refusing them to him, counted as a factor in favor of America both during the Revolutionary War and later. The treaty between Prussia and the United States was a valuable recognition of their right to enter the family of nations, and there can be little doubt that Franklin gladly saw in it one of the results of his visit to Germany, and of his influence upon German publicists. His own success in securing the powerful help of France by the Treaty of Alliance, which gave this country in its hour of need both men and money, and in making a treaty of peace with Great Britain, almost in spite of France, may well justify the belief that he too inspired the Germans with a desire to atone for their profitable alliance with Great Britain by an early recognition of the American Republic as soon as its independence was acknowledged.



THE LINEMAN

BY WILLIAM HURD HILLYER

THIN, scattered ranks of snow
 Stampeue along th street,
 And saggi g wires betray the
 slow,
 Chill mischief of the sleet.

In homely garb of toil,
 With tools of quaint device,
 The lineman comes, his shouldered coil
 Gray with a rime of ice.

Unpraised adventurer,
 He climbs enchanted towers,
 And mends the magic threads that stir
 The world's remotest powers.

From heights wind-desolate
 His torch flames cheerless blue.
 (Red, red the hearth where loved ones
 wait
 The winter twilight through.)

Lineman, what hindereth
 That message I would hear?
 Canst mend the web 'twixt Life and
 Death?
 Canst gain responses clear?

I call, but still behold
 No spark of answering fire;
 Oh for some lineman true and bold
 To mend that broken wire!

A STOLEN DAY

By Harriet Clay Penman



HE watched intently the tall figure disappearing in the door of the Pullman car. It is not often vouchsafed to man to see, in the dull dawn of a March day, at a way station, a lady travelling unattended and wearing a long Empire coat lined with ermine. But it was not the sumptuous garment which fastened his gaze, rather the frank look from the sombre eyes as she passed.

Later he abjectly besought the porter to give him a seat next hers, and was strangely fretted until the train pulled out and he found that the car had but two occupants, and he might sit where he would and catch glimpses of the face beneath the gray hat.

She soon removed it and hung it with the ermine-lined coat, and he felt an unreasoning sense of satisfaction in the revelation of a gray gown of some soft, clinging material.

"I have always liked women who wore gray," he reflected, and, looking towards the nimbus of brown hair above the chair, wove pleasant fancies as the train wound up the mountain.

It was a region where the rains had descended and the floods had come to the deluge point, and the landscape bore ominous scars from the conflict. His solitary companion up the aisle turned to look back at a wrecked bridge, and he caught again that calm, level glance from the unsmiling eyes. It gave him an odd idea of the intimacy of thought that may exist between two strangers and he hungered for another, but she fell to reading a little red book, and he began restless peregrinations to the smoking-compartment. It afforded him a sensation in which surprise and wonder were mingled to see above her ear a lock of hair which had many threads of gray. It added a singular note to a face which was still young.

Finally the train stopped and remained so long that she roused from absorption in her book and looked out along the precipice, close to which the track lay. Instead of annoyance at the delay, her face bore a well-defined expression of relief and satisfaction, and the man who watched it marvelled exceedingly.

An hour passed, and then he caught another glance from the blue-gray eyes. He sprang to his feet and walked directly to her side.

"I can't help it if you snub me and call the porter and the conduc-

tor and all the fellows on the train," he exclaimed, "I've got to speak to you. I——"

But here she broke in, a faint smile lighting the shadow on her face: "Why didn't you come before? Do you know, if you hadn't spoken to me very soon, I should have been tempted to break a window or make some violent demonstration which would have demanded attention?"

The man almost gasped, and she continued, as if reading his thought:

"Yes, I know it is unconventional. Possibly you are wondering whether I am in the habit of going to and fro on the earth talking with strange men without an introduction. I shall not explain; the day is too brief. It is my only day."

"I am too happy to be allowed to speak to you at all," he stammered, an eager glow in his eyes. "I wanted to follow you into the train and sit right in this chair next yours, but I didn't quite dare, although I'll dare do most things to get what I want."

"I know," she said softly, adding in a matter-of-fact tone: "Now, I do not intend to kidnap you. I have no sort of designs upon you, but I wanted you to talk to me, and here you are, so proceed," and she nestled back with a sigh of content.

He drew the chair round where they could both look down the gorge and leaned forward so that the clear profile of his companion was carved against the velvet background for his delectation. Beneath that gaze, bold yet tender, she stirred uneasily.

"What a lot of time I've wasted," he complained, as if to himself.

"Yes, haven't we?" she said, and his heart gave an extra throb. "It is so stupid when the world is a little car with only two people in it and they sit at opposite ends and glower at each other. You were so slow in coming and the day is so brief."

Again the allusion to the brevity of the day, and he said wonderingly,—

"But there are other days."

"Oh, no," she answered gravely, "not for me. They are for others. This is all my day in the wide world. Please talk to me, I am waiting; and sit forward where I can see your face. I am glad you are so good to look at."

Again he felt utterly bewildered. This was certainly a new experience. He was not ignorant of his advantages in the way of appearance, but he was not accustomed to hearing them discussed with so much candor.

"I cannot talk," he declared helplessly. "The words I want to say I dare not speak."

"Say the words you dare not speak," she urged gently. "They are what I wait to hear on this, my day."

"How can I do what you ask?" he demanded as in desperation, after a little silence. "How dare I tell you that every time I passed I wanted to touch your hair? Great Heaven! what is woven in that soft, cloudy blur against a woman's temples that so drives a man's wits from his head? How dare I tell you that more than ever I wanted anything in my life I wanted to touch your hair?"

"Yes, yes!" she half whispered, her eyes almost closed, the dark lashes shading her cheek. "Go on. More than ever I wanted anything in my life, I want to hear your voice."

The man had a voice deep and rich and beautiful. He did not know what tones of added beauty it took on as he murmured almost incoherently:

"I want to touch your hand, my Lady of the Sweetest Eyes! I want to feel if your pulses will beat just a little more swiftly and whether there will come a flush to your cheek as the blood takes a quickened leap."

The lashes quivered under his burning glance.

"I want to kiss your eyes," went on the impassioned tone; "I don't think I ever cared to kiss the eyes of any other woman. I do not think any other woman has such white lids, with the blue veins running like lace into the shadow of her hair."

He leaned closer, and some of the curling tendrils brushed his face. "My God!" he exclaimed, "what have you done to me? I feel as if the old legend of Lillith were indeed true, and that about my heart a single hair is tightening to check the tide of life. And only this morning," he assevered to the blighted tree outside the window, "I did not know this woman lived!"

"You were so late in coming," she said, "and then to have you but a little day—and to think you did not know me!"

"Know you! When? where?" he demanded wildly.

"I do not remember," she answered in a weary tone. "I have not time to remember, but I think it was in some other star. I knew you as soon as I saw you this morning, but you were so long in coming to me."

"But I thought—you do not look like a woman to whom a stranger might speak," he said eagerly.

"And you do not look like a man who would intrude upon a stranger," she replied; "and yet you *had* to speak to me, you couldn't help it. I tell you I am not to be thwarted!" and she changed her position to look more directly into his face.

"I have this one day, and it is mine by right. I have been in a prison for thirty years, and my sentence may possibly, if not probably, be thirty years longer. Then I shall be an old woman. Oh, yes, I shall live to be very old. We do that, and I have never been ill in my

life. Nothing hurts me, or I should have been dead these ten years. But I shall be an old woman, and there will be no dark eyes on earth to speak to mine as yours speak now. When I am sixty you will not see me in the throng, and you will not care whether my pulses leap at your words. This is my day. All the other days have been like that dreary stretch of snowy landscape, with its broken bridges and ruin on every side."

"But, oh," he interrupted, "surely you will not slip away from me at this journey's end, where I may not see you ever again? There are so many days before you are sixty—for you and for me. I do not mean to lose you now—that I swear!" a triumphant ring in his tones.

"And I swear," she said solemnly and reverently, an uplifted hand staying his impetuous words, "that this is our only day—yours and mine. Do you suppose," she asked with sudden fierceness, "that I should have imperilled all future bliss if there had been a future for you and me? Do you fancy for a moment that I should have encouraged a stranger to come to me and should have permitted him to say what you have said if there were to be a to-morrow? Ah, no! I realize too well what such a man as you—a man who has surely been beloved by many women—would think of me in the to-morrows if they were to exist for us. It is because I shall step out of your existence when this day is done that I am coming into it now. It is because I shall never hear them again that I long to hear your words now. To you it is but an incident; to me it is a rosary of memory whose beads I shall count through all my lonely to-morrows." Then she turned her face away and said pleadingly:

"Speak to me again. Say something that I may thread on my rosary."

"Oh," he cried, "the thread of your rosary is drawing closer and closer about my heart and you hold it in your grasp. See,"—lifting his hand, strong and fine, with sensitive finger-tips,— "see the veins swelling like whip-cords. You do not know what chaos your words produce in the mind of a man who is so much alive as I am."

A flush rose to his brow. "I am filled with just one big longing," he exclaimed,— "to have you in my arms, to lay your head against my breast! I wonder," he said, bending to look deep into her eyes, "if you would ever come to touch me lightly with your hand, to pass it over my brow, where a pulse throbs so fast just now—ah——"

"Would I not?" she broke in. "Oh, I could be so sweet to you—so gentle, so tender! but it is not permitted on this our day. All we can do is to look out of the window and speak about the tangle of telegraph wires yonder across the river. How like Ophelia's hair they are—poor, dishevelled wires! and the stranded engine on the bit of track whose beginning and ending is the torrent,—how forlornly

majestic it seems in its helplessness! You can speak to me and tell me thoughts which thrill my very soul, but, ah, my friend, whose name I do not even know, it is not written that I shall ever be enfolded in any man's embrace."

The train started with many noisy protests and moved laboriously up the heavy grade.

"Ah, if it would but go more slowly!" she sighed, and he blessed her ardently for the words.

As the moments passed she made him sit a little removed, where she could watch his face in the varying light.

"I must look at it well," she said, "for it is the cross of my fair rosary, and I shall long for a sight of it so often and often when the rosary will be all that is left to me."

It was an unusual face upon which she gazed; smoothly shaven and with a noble curve of brow where much dark hair clustered, a proud mouth, and a jaw powerful in its lines—a face, indeed, to gladden the heart of any woman. The eyes, well opened and clear, while ordinarily cold, now blazed with a fire which brought an answering glow to her cheek.

"I am glad you are so good to look at," she repeated, "so tall and strong and masterful. You are just what I would have you. Isn't it a heavenly dispensation that sent a flood to keep people from taking this train?" she added irrelevantly.

"Oh my Lady of the Sweet Eyes! it is, it is," he groaned; "but I declare to you if it weren't for that rascally porter who is always popping in and out, you couldn't keep me over here across the aisle on any pretext of studying my raving beauty. I wish he would tumble through a bridge"—the last remark delivered with a ferocity of expression that sent dimples round the mouth of his listener.

"There used to be tunnels on this blessed road," he continued reflectively; then with sudden hopefulness, "I wonder if the floods have washed them all away? A look of doubt clouded his visage. "It would be just like some infernal idiot to want to lay a track round a tunnel if there has been a washout. I'm going to see what's become of those tunnels. I have a fixed prejudice against riding on a road that hasn't them;" and he tore out of the car, while the lady leaned her head on her hands and covered her eyes.

It was thus he found her on his return, and though she hastened to look up brightly, he saw the dimness and yet was glad, for did she not welcome him through the mist? He remarked with an air of elaborate indifference: "The conductor says we've passed some of them. I don't remember, do you?"

"Yes," she replied hesitatingly, "there was one—before you came to me."

"O Lord!" he lamented, "and you never said a word!"

At this she laughed outright. "Do you imagine I meditated pouncing on you like a Kipling vampire? Why, it was very soon after we started. You would have rung for help."

They had luncheon brought in from the buffet and ate it with merriment and zest. The train had come to another stand-still, and they both felt a thrill as the porter "guessed" gloomily that they would be more than five hours late, "mebbe not get in at all."

"It is borrowed time," she whispered, "and I shall have to pay dearly for my long, sweet day."

In the brief interval when they were alone from the too attentive service he said in an unsteady tone, "It is like the beginning of a wedding-journey"—but she started from her seat with a look so weighted with terror that he never completed the sentence. She had grown white like that when he had spoken admiringly of the silver gleam in the hair above her right temple.

Later she begged him to talk of himself, his hopes and ambitions. He told her of earlier struggles, an obstinate fight with fate, and his ultimate triumph. She gazed at him with pride. He spoke humbly, she thought, for one who was a success in a world of so many failures. She would not talk of herself, only that she was determined to have this one day, since no other had ever been hers.

"You would want one day if you had been shut as in four walls all your life," she said pathetically; "and you would not have all the sunshine in your face that gleams there now."

As she spoke a sudden darkness settled down upon them, and she caught a last tender, exultant look.

"It was long in coming," he said, "but this is worth the waiting;" and he gathered her close and touched her hair, and she felt his hot kisses on her shut lids—always her eyes and brow; but with a swift movement she drew his face down and let her soft lips find his.

"You said you could be sweet to me," the music of the deep tones sang in her ear, "but, oh Heaven above, I never knew there was so sweet a woman in the world!"—Then there came a tumultuous sound which was not the rumbling roar of the tunnel, and reverberating from the rock-bound arches were mingled cries and shouts and curses.

He held her fast, while in the thick night a maddened voice screamed:

"Another dam has broken and the tunnel is flooding from the front. It's all up with us, for the water has stopped the fires and the engine can't reverse!"

The two occupants of the parlor coach rushed to the rear door. Already their chance of escape was cut off, if, indeed, there had been any

hope from the first. The water was over the platform. They clambered upon chairs, and the man wrapped the fur cloak about the form that leaned against his breast. His fingers pressed her eyelids.

"You are not crying, oh my sweetheart?" he asked. Life beat strong in his veins, and to be drowned like a rat in a trap was horrible, loathly.

"Crying? ah, no!" she answered; "touch my lips and feel the smile that will be there while breath lasts. I did not think I should smile until I died when I said this morning that I should live to be a very old woman. I did not think God would be so good. But now there will be no horrible to-morrow for me with its dreadful awakening. Touch my lips, dear, and feel the smile you cannot see."

Then a thought smote her heart with terror.

"But you—ah, you—with no horror awaiting you in life, for you it is sweet, and I would not have you die. Perhaps alone you could save yourself, you are so strong. Promise me that if there is the slightest chance you will not let me hinder you. Let me go now—it can only be a moment or two longer at the most, and maybe,"—a little sob in her throat,—“maybe I shall cling to you at the very last, because they say it is hard to gasp for breath when one's pulses are full of life, and perhaps I shall not know that I am clinging—promise me that if a chance comes you will save yourself?” she almost shrieked above the deafening roar of the water.

"Listen to me!" he said hurriedly. "I believe there is no chance for either of us, but somehow I don't care, if life means to be without you, living or dead. In the instant that is left, hear me. I shall not leave you ever. I shall hold you as long as my strength lasts. You have given me the happiest day of my life; the night comes, but I shall have you in my arms."

The closed car had resisted the flood at first, but now it rushed in with a horrible, muffled surging, rising like a wave until it swept about their feet and chilled them to the bone. Outside, vast cakes of ice pounded at the windows. There were no lights anywhere, no sounds but of the water.

The woman clung more closely to her companion. He lifted her to the back of the chair as the fearful tide climbed higher. It was now to their waists, and she shivered continuously as it benumbed her limbs; but still he held her lips against his own and said, "Ah, but you are sweet as you told me you could be!"

The moment came swiftly when they knew it was time for the farewells to be said, for they were both fast losing grasp on life, and heart to heart the words were spoken, solemnly, tenderly.

"I do not regret my day," she said, as he held her higher that she might breathe an instant longer in the stifling air before the flood

ingulfed them; and he echoed, "Neither do I regret mine—and so, dear heart, good-night!"

Then it was that she made a supreme effort and flung herself down that he might not lose the last faint little chance of his life because of her clinging hands. With a hoarse cry of agony he plunged after her, groping blindly in the darkness. When he came to the surface it was to clutch the chandelier rod and to have again in his arms the drowning woman, who would have given her life for his. But so rapidly do the comedies of earth follow the tragedies, that it was at this moment the heavy cable which a canny brakeman had unwound from the Pullman car as he ran began to do its work. Hastening out before the full meaning of the catastrophe had been realized by the ill-fated occupants of the train, he had cried the alarm, and stout engines, behind and beyond the fury of the flood, now were dragging it to a position of safety.

When the two in the last car were released from their peril, both were too much exhausted to feel any particular interest in the subsequent proceedings, which included very heroic treatment from the natives in the vicinity of the disaster.

The next day the man, in spite of his powerful frame and splendid health, was raving in a fever with indications of pneumonia. The lady in gray looked well to his comfort, engaged nurses, and—left him to go on her way. When he came out of delirium, three days later, he cursed, by all his gods, the nurses, the doctors, the natives, and the railway officials for allowing her to depart. One venturesome person endeavored to arouse some sense of self-respect in the patient's breast by suggesting that he, himself, would scarcely make such a row over somebody who apparently was not enough interested to stay, when he had saved her life by clinging to the roof of a car like a bat. But the violence with which this intimation was received did not tend to speedy recovery, and it was not until the doctors allowed him to see a letter which had been left for him that he suddenly became as peaceable as a lamb.

The letter ran thus:

"MY GALAHAD: In leaving you, I leave all that life has for me. I think it will disillusion you to find that I go when you are too ill to know it, but this is best, even if it is the hardest task I ever had, and I have had many.

"Do not seek me out; it will be useless. I shall know that you are getting well. I shall always have the rosary, for I have had my day. You are the noblest, tenderest heart in the world, my Galahad, and so,

"Good-by."

Of course, he did try to seek her out. The man's nature was stirred to its foundations, and he was so wretchedly unhappy that the only

relief was in hoping for a glimpse of her face. He haunted the railway stations, and many were the indiscreet catechisings which the officials underwent. Finally one day it was the ermine-lined coat that gave him a clew.

Moping miserably at the club, months after the incident which had changed his views of life, he started out with the thought of calling at a fashionable up-town home where a welcome always awaited him. It was here that the clew was afforded by one who would never intentionally have rendered such a service.

Beautiful and a widow, Mrs. Alling would rather have had a careless glance from this man's eyes than vows of adoration from another.

"You look as if you had something on your mind," she said after the greetings, which were rather effusive on her part because of his long absence. She was too clever to complain of his defection.

"I haven't," he returned indifferently; "I am not so sure that there is such a thing as mind."

She knew his obstinate moods and remarked lightly: "I dare say we recognize it chiefly from its absence. I saw a woman to-day, however, who must wonder about the nature of mind. She had a father with too much, a mother-in-law with the wrong kind, and a husband with none at all."

The man opposite the lamp looked bored, but his hostess went on, with the intention of leading the conversation into a personal channel:

"She was my friend once—a long time ago, in school. After she left I saw little of her, and she had an old, crabbed father, who did not make home pleasant for his daughter nor her guests. She was a shy girl with a sensitive soul, and that father of hers was as impossibly unpleasant as Magda's, only worse. He had a mania for blood—in the way of ancestry, and he made the child marry a little nonentity who had some wonderful Saxon lineage. Why didn't she rebel? Oh, you never saw her father. He used to go into some sort of a blue fit when he was crossed, and then her mother, a poor, weak soul, would get one of another kind, and the girl simply couldn't stand it.

"Well, the bridegroom went stark, raving mad on the afternoon of the wedding, as they started on their bridal journey. It was a way his old family had—going mad sooner or later. I believe it was awful. They were in a private car, which was side-tracked at some junction to be attached to another train. She was alone with him, and nobody ever knew the details except that there had been a quarrel, but the porters found him trying to kill her with a little Spanish dagger which she used as a paper-cutter. She's had a white lock in her hair ever since. Why, what's the matter, Bertie?"

"Oh, nothing," the man replied, "only a premonitory twinge of

the fearful headaches I get lately." He withdrew from the crimson glare of the lamp.

"What happened next?" he asked in a constrained tone.

"They whisked him off to a retreat. That was ten years ago, and, will you believe it, the foolish creature goes every day of her life to see him, just as if she had loved him? He chases her out of the room too. Why under the sun she does it is only conjectured. Some say she has remorseful notions that if she had not irritated him in the quarrel that day of the wedding he would not have lost his mind, and then too she lives in the same house with his mother, who keeps up every morbid tendency the poor girl ever had with her pratings about duty and atonement. She has beautiful clothes and lots of money, but she has always been the most unhappy-looking creature until to-day; I thought she seemed different—younger, somehow. That was what made me think to tell you all this: seeing her so unexpectedly beaming, and you, who have always been so jolly, looking as if you had been arrested for robbing a bank.

"Some women," she continued meditatively, "wouldn't mind having a mad husband, if he could be put away where he couldn't bother, if they might also have ermine-lined cloaks, such as she sometimes wears."

The man, who had been walking nervously about the room, turned abruptly. "What did you say her name was?" he demanded in a tone so unsteady that Mrs. Alling, busy with the tea-things, put down a cup and looked at him curiously. Something she saw in his face affected her carefully controlled nerves.

"I didn't say," she replied after a little hesitation. "Come and have some tea." But with the briefest excuses, her companion hastened out, a smile of triumph in his eyes.



AT THE INN OF OUT-OF-DOORS

BY CHARLOTTE PENDLETON

MY soul is housed in a sunny place,
Where golden hay-stacks shimmer;
It breasts the mill-wheel's sullen race
With the joy of a stalwart swimmer:

It dreams in the star-lit realms of space,
Or is led through the dark by the glimmer
Of a glow-worm's spark from place to place,
As the lights of the world grow dimmer.

A MAN OF HIS WORD

BY

ALICE DUER MILLER



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1903

A MAN OF HIS WORD

VOICE OF THE WEST

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